OBSERVATIONS ON THE MUSSULMAUNS OF INDIA

Descriptive of Their Manners, Customs, Habits and Religious Opinions
Made During a Twelve Years' Residence in Their Immediate Society

by

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Second Edition, Edited with Notes and an Introduction by W. Crooke

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WITH SENTIMENTS OF GRATITUDE AND PROFOUND RESPECT THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE HUMBLY DEDICATED, WITH PERMISSION,

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS AUGUSTA;

BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S MOST OBEDIENT, FAITHFULLY ATTACHED, AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

B. MEER HASSAN ALI.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In the present reprint the text of the original edition of this work has been reproduced without change, even the curious transliterations of the vernacular words and phrases having been preserved. The correct forms of these, so far as they have been ascertained, have been given in the Notes and in the Index-Glossary. I have added an Introduction containing an account of the authoress based on the scanty information available, and I have compiled some notes illustrating questions connected with Islam and Musalman usages. I have not thought it necessary to give detailed references in the notes, but a list of the works which have been used will be found at the end of the text. As in other volumes of this series, the diacritical marks indicating the varieties of the sound of certain letters in the Arabic and Devanagari alphabets have not been given: they are unnecessary for the scholar and serve only to embarrass the general reader.

I have to acknowledge help from several friends in the preparation of this edition. Mr. W. Foster, C.I.E., has supplied valuable notes from the India Office records on Mir Hasan 'Ali and his family; Dr. W. Hoey, late I.C.S., and Mr. L.N. Jopling, I.C.S., Deputy-Commissioner, Lucknow, have made inquiries on the same subject. Mr. H.C. Irwin, late I.C.S., has furnished much information on Oudh affairs in the time of the Nawabi. Sir C.J. Lyall, K.C.S.I, C.I.E., and Professor E.G. Browne, M.A., have permitted me to consult them on certain obscure words in the text.

W. CROOKE.

INTRODUCTION

Very little is known about the authoress of this interesting book. She is reticent about the affairs of her husband and of herself, and inquiries recently made at Lucknow, at the India Office, and in other likely quarters in England, have added little to the scanty information we possess about her.

The family of her husband claimed to be of Sayyid origin, that is to say, to be descended from the martyrs, Hasan and Husain, the sons of Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet, by her marriage with her cousin-german, 'Ali. The father-in-law of the authoress, Mir Haji Shah, of whom she speaks with affection and respect, was the son of the Qazi, or Muhammadan law-officer, of Ludhiana, in the Panjab. During his boyhood the Panjab was exposed to raids by the Mahrattas and incursions of the Sikhs. He therefore abandoned his studies, wandered about for a time, and finally took service with a certain Raja—where she does not tell us—who was then raising a force in expectation of an attack by the Sikhs. He served in at least one campaign, and then, while still a young man, made a pilgrimage thrice to Mecca and Kerbela, which gained him the title of Haji, or pilgrim. While he was in Arabia he fell short of funds, but he succeeded in curing the wife of a rich merchant who had long suffered from a serious disease. She provided him with money to continue his journey. He married under romantic circumstances an Arab girl named Fatimah as his second wife, and then went to Lucknow, which, under the rule of the Nawabs, was the centre in Northern India of the Shi'ah sect, to which he belonged. Here he had an exciting adventure with a tiger during a hunting party, at which the Nawab, Shuja-ud-daula, was present. He is believed to have held the post of Peshnamaz, or 'leader in prayer', in the household of the eunuch, Almas 'Ali Khan, who is referred to by the authoress.

His son was Mir Hasan 'Ali, the husband of the authoress. The tradition in Lucknow is that he quarrelled with his father and went to Calcutta, where he taught Arabic to some British officers and gained a knowledge of English. We next hear of him in England, when in May 1810 he was appointed assistant to the well-known oriental scholar, John Shakespear, professor of Hindustani at the Military College, Addiscombe, from 1807 to 1830, author of a dictionary of Hindustani and other educational works. Mention is made of two cadets boarding with Mir Hasan 'Ali, but it does not appear from the records where he lived. After remaining at the College for six years he resigned his appointment on the ground of ill-health, with the intention of returning to India. He must have been an efficient teacher, because, on his resignation, the East India Company treated him with liberality. He received a gift of £50 as a reward for his translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew, and from the Court minutes it appears that on December 17, 1816, it was resolved to grant him 100 guineas to provide his passage and £100 for equipment. Further, the Bengal Government was instructed to furnish him on his arrival with means to reach his native place, and to pay him a pension of Rs. 100 *per mensem* for the rest of his life.[1]

A tradition from Lucknow states that he was sent to England on a secret mission, 'to ask the Home authorities to accept a contract of Oudh direct from Nasir-ud-din Haidar, who was quite willing to remit the money of contract direct to England instead of settling the matter with the British Resident at Lucknow'. It is not clear what this exactly means. It may be that the King of Oudh, thinking that annexation was inevitable, may have been inclined to attempt to secure some private arrangement with the East India Company, under which he would remain titular sovereign, paying a tribute direct to the authorities in England, and that he wished to conduct these negotiations without the knowledge of the Resident at Lucknow. There does not seem to be independent evidence of this mission of Mir Hasan 'Ali, and we are told that it was, as might have been expected, unsuccessful.

No mention is made of his wife in the official records, and I have been unable to trace her family name or the date and place of her marriage. Mir Hasan 'Ali and his wife sailed for Calcutta, and travelled to Lucknow via Patna. She tells little of her career in India, save that she lived there for twelve years, presumably from 1816 to 1828, and that eleven years of that time were spent in the house of her father-in-law at Lucknow. In the course of her book she gives only one date, September 18, 1825, when her husband held the post of Tahsildar, or sub-collector of revenue, at Kanauj in the British district of Farrukhabad. No records bearing on his career as a British official are forthcoming. Another Lucknow tradition states that on his arrival at the Court of Oudh from England he was, on the recommendation of the Resident, appointed to a post in the King's service on a salary of Rs. 300 per annum. Subsequently he fell into disgrace and was obliged to retire to Farrukhabad with the court eunuch, Nawab Mu'tamad-ud-daula, Agha Mir.

With the restoration of Agha Mir to power, Hasan 'Ali returned to Lucknow, and was granted a life pension of Rs. 100 *per mensem* for his services as Darogha at the Residency, and in consideration of his negotiations between the King and the British Government or the East India Company.

From the information collected at Lucknow it appears that he was known as Mir Londoni, 'the London gentleman', and that he was appointed Safir, or Attaché, at the court of King Ghazi-ud-din Haidar, who conferred upon him the title of Maslaha-ud-daula, 'Counsellor of State'. By another account he held the post of Mir Munshi, head native clerk or secretary to the British Resident.

One of the most influential personages in the court of Oudh during this period was that stormy petrel of politics, Nawab Hakim Mehndi. He had been the right-hand man of the Nawab Sa'adat Ali, and on the accession of his son Ghazi-ud-din Haidar in 1814 he was dismissed on the ground that he had incited the King to protest against interference in Oudh affairs by the Resident, Colonel Baillie. The King at the last moment became frightened at the prospect of an open rupture with the Resident. Nawab Hakim Mehndi was deprived of all his public offices and of much of his property, and he was imprisoned for a time. On his release he retired into British territory, and in 1824 he was living in magnificent style at Fatehgarh. In that year Bishop Heber visited Lucknow and received a courteous letter from the Nawab inviting him to his house at Fatehgarh. He gave the

Bishop an assurance 'that he had an English housekeeper, who knew perfectly well how to do the honours of his establishment to gentlemen of her own nation. (She is, in fact, a singular female, who became the wife of one of the Hindustani professors at Hertford, now the Hukeem's dewan,[2] and bears, I believe, a very respectable character.)' The authoress makes no reference to Hakim Mehndi, nor to the fact that she and her husband were in his employment.

The cause of her final departure from India is stated by W. Knighton in a highly coloured sketch of court life in the days of King Nasir-ud-daula, *The Private Life of an Eastern King*, published in 1855. 'Mrs. Meer Hassan was an English lady who married a Lucknow noble during a visit to England. She spent twelve years with him in India, and did not allow him to exercise a Moslem's privilege of a plurality of wives. Returning to England afterwards on account of her health, she did not again rejoin him.'[3] The jealousy between rival wives in a polygamous Musalman household is notorious. 'A rival may be good, but her son never: a rival even if she be made of dough is intolerable: the malice of a rival is known to everybody: wife upon wife and heartburnings'—such are the common proverbs which define the situation. But if her separation from her husband was really due to this cause, it is curious that in her book she notes as a mark of a good wife that she is tolerant of such arrangements. 'She receives him [her husband] with undisguised pleasure, although she has just before learned that another member has been added to his well-peopled harem. The good and forbearing wife, by this line of conduct, secures to herself the confidence of her husband, who, feeling assured that the amiable woman has an interest in his happiness, will consult her and take her advice in the domestic affairs of his children by other wives, and even arrange by her judgement all the settlements for their marriages, &c. He can speak of other wives without restraint—for she knows he has others—and her education has taught her that they deserve her respect in proportion as they contribute to her husband's happiness.'[4]

It is certainly noticeable that she says very little about her husband beyond calling him in a conventional way 'an excellent husband' and 'a dutiful, affectionate son'. There is no indication that her husband accompanied her on her undated visit to Delhi, when she was received in audience by the King, Akbar II, and the Queen, who were then living in a state of semi-poverty. She tells us that they 'both appeared, and expressed themselves, highly gratified with the visit of an English lady, who could explain herself in their language without embarrassment, or the assistance of an interpreter, and who was the more interesting to them from the circumstance of being the wife of a Syaad'.[5]

From inquiries made at Lucknow it has been ascertained that Mir Hasan 'Ali had no children by his English wife. By one or more native wives he had three children: a daughter, Fatimah Begam, who married a certain Mir Sher 'Ali, of which marriage one or more descendants are believed to be alive; and two sons, Mir Sayyid 'Ali or Miran Sahib, said to have served the British Government as a Tahsildar, whose grandson is now living at Lucknow, and Mir Sayyid Husain, who became a Risaldar, or commander of a troop, in one of the Oudh Irregular Cavalry Regiments. One of his descendants, Mir Agha 'Ali Sahib, possesses some landed property which was probably acquired by the Risaldar.

After the annexation of Oudh Mir Hasan 'Ali is said to have been paid a pension of Rs. 100 *per mensem* till his death in 1863.

It is also worthy of remark that she carefully avoids any reference to the palace intrigues and maladministration which prevailed in Oudh during the reigns of Ghazi-ud-din Haidar and Nasir-ud-din Haidar, who occupied the throne during her residence at Lucknow. She makes a vague apology for the disorganized state of the country: 'Acts of oppression may sometimes occur in Native States without the knowledge even, and much less by the command of, the Sovereign ruler, since the good order of the government mainly depends on the disposition of the Prime Minister for the time being'[6]—a true remark, but no defence for the conduct of the weak princes who did nothing to suppress corruption and save their subjects from oppression.

Little is known of the history of Mrs. Mir Hasan 'Ali after her arrival in England. It has been stated that she was attached in some capacity to the household of the Princess Augusta, who died unmarried on September 22, 1840.[7] This is probable, because the list of subscribers to her book is headed by Queen Adelaide, the Princess Augusta, and other ladies of the Royal Family. She must have been in good repute among Anglo-Indians, because several well-known names appear in the list: H.T. Colebrooke, G.C. Haughton, Mordaunt Ricketts and his wife, and Colonel J. Tod.

The value of the book rests on the fact that it is a record of the first-hand experiences of an English lady who occupied the exceptional position of membership of a Musalman family. She tells us nothing of her friends in Lucknow, but she had free access to the houses of respectable Sayyids, and thus gained ample facilities for the study of the manners and customs of Musalman families. Much of her information on Islam was obtained from her husband and his father, both learned, travelled gentlemen, and by them she was treated with a degree of toleration unusual in a Shi'ah household, this sect being rigid and often fanatical followers of Islam. She was allowed to retain a firm belief in the Christian religion, and she tells us that Mir Haji Shah delighted in conversing on religious topics, and that his happiest time was spent in the quiet of night when his son translated to him the Bible as she read it.[8]

Her picture of zenana life is obviously coloured by her frank admiration for the people amongst whom she lived, who treated her with respect and consideration. It is thus to some extent idyllic. At the same time, it may be admitted that she was exceptionally fortunate in her friends. Her sketch may be usefully compared with that of Mrs. Fanny Parks in her charming book, *The Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*. Mrs. Parks had the advantage of having acquired a literary knowledge of Hindustani, while Mrs. Mir Hasan 'Ali, to judge from the way in which she transliterates native words, can have been able to speak little more than a broken patois, knew little of grammar, and was probably unable to read or write the Arabic character. Colonel Gardner, who had wide and peculiar experience, said to Mrs. Parks: 'Nothing can exceed the quarrels that go on in the zenana, or the complaints the begams make against each other. A common complaint is "Such a one has been practising witchcraft against me". If the husband make a present to one wife, if it be only a basket of mangoes, he must make

the same exactly to all the other wives to keep the peace. A wife, when in a rage with her husband, if on account of jealousy, often says, "I wish I were married to a grass-cutter," i.e. because a grass-cutter is so poor that he can only afford to have one wife.'[9] Mrs. Parks from her own experience calls the zenana 'a place of intrigue, and those who live within four walls cannot pursue a straight path; how can it be otherwise, when so many conflicting passions are called forth?'[10] She adds that 'Musalmani ladies generally forget their learning when they grow up, or they neglect it. Everything that passes without the four walls is repeated to them by their spies; never was any place so full of intrigue, scandal, and chit-chat as a zenana.'[11] When she visited the Delhi palace she remarks: 'As for beauty, in a whole zenana there may be two or three handsome women, and all the rest remarkably ugly.'[12] European officers at the present day have no opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of the conditions of zenana life; but from the rumours that reach them they would probably accept the views of Mrs. Parks in preference to those of Mrs. Mir Hasan 'Ali.

Though her opinions on the life of Musalman ladies is to some extent open to criticism, and must be taken to apply only to the exceptional society in which she moved, her account of the religious feasts and fasts, the description of the marriage ceremonies and that of the surroundings of a native household are trustworthy and valuable. Some errors, not of much importance and probably largely due to her imperfect knowledge of the language, have been corrected in the notes of the present edition. It must also be understood that her knowledge of native life was confined to that of the Musalmans, and she displays no accurate acquaintance with the religion, life or customs of the Hindus. The account in the text displays a bias in favour of the Shi'ah sect of Musalmans, as contrasted with that of the Sunnis. For a more impartial study of the question the reader is referred to Sir W. Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate, The Caliphate*, and to Major R.D. Osborn, *Islam under the Khalifs of Baghdad*.

[1] Col. H.M. Vibart, *Addiscombe*, pp. 39, 41, 42.

[2] *Diwan*, chief agent, manager.

[3] p. 208.

[4] p. 182.

[5] p. 290.

[6] p. 227.

[7] *Calcutta Review*, ii. 387.

[8] pp. 80, 422.

[9] Vol. i, pp. 230, 453.

[10] i. 391.

[11] i. 450.

[12] ii. 215.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Actuated by a sense of duty to the people with whom twelve years of my life were passed on terms of intimacy and kindness, I was induced to write the principal number of the following Letters as faithful sketches of the Manners, Customs, and Habits of a people but little known to the European reader. They were at first designed merely for the perusal of private friends; who, viewing them with interest, recommended my bringing them before the public, considering that the information they contained would be acceptable from its originality, as presenting a more familiar view of the opinions and the domestic habits of the Mussulmaun community of Hindoostaun than any hitherto presented through other channels.

I have found (and I believe many will coincide with me in the opinion) that it is far easier to think with propriety than to write our thoughts with perspicuity and correctness; but when the object in view is one which conscience dictates, the humblest effort of a female pen advances with courage; and thus influenced, I venture to present my work to the public, respectfully trusting they will extend their usual indulgence to a first attempt, from the pen of a very humble scribe, more solicitous for approbation than applause.

The orthography of Asiatic words may differ in some instances in my pages from those of other writers—this, however, is from error, not design, and may be justly attributed to my own faulty pronunciation.

I have inserted in these Letters many anecdotes and fables, which at the first view, may be considered as mere nursery tales. My object, however, will I trust plead my excuse: they are introduced in order to illustrate the people whom I have undertaken to describe; and, primarily strengthened by the moral tendency of each anecdote or fable selected for my pages, I cannot but consider them as well suited to the purpose.

Without farther apology, but with very great deference, I leave these imperfect attempts to the liberality of my readers, acknowledging with gratitude the condescending patronage I have been honoured with, and sincerely desiring wherever anticipations of amusement or information from my observations have been formed, that the following pages may fulfil those expectations, and thus gratify my wish to be in the smallest degree useful in my generation.

[B. MEER HASSAN ALI]

OBSERVATIONS, ETC.

LETTER I

Introductory Remarks.—The characteristic simplicity of manners exhibited in Native families.—Their munificent charity.—The Syaads.—Their descent, and the veneration paid to them.—Their pride of birth.—Fast of Mahurrum.—Its origin.—The Sheahs and Soonies.—Memorandum of distances.—Mount Judee (Judea), the attributed burying-place of Adam and Noah.—Mausoleum of Ali.—The tomb of Eve.—Meer Hadjee Shaah.

I have promised to give you, my friends, occasional sketches of men and manners, comprising the society of the Mussulmauns in India. Aware of the difficulty of my task, I must entreat your kind indulgence to the weaknesses of a female pen, thus exercised for your amusement, during my twelve years' domicile in their immediate society.

Every one who sojourns in India for any lengthened period, will, I believe, agree with me, that in order to promote health of body, the mind must be employed in active pursuits. The constitutionally idle persons, of either sex, amongst Europeans, are invariably most subject to feel distressed by the prevailing annoyances of an Indian climate: from a listless life results discontent, apathy, and often disease. I have found, by experience, the salutary effects of employing time, as regards, generally, healthiness of body and of mind. The hours devoted to this occupation (tracing remarks for the perusal of far distant friends) have passed by without a murmur or a sigh, at the height of the thermometer, or the length of a day during the season of hot winds, or of that humid heat which prevails throughout the periodical rains. Time flies quickly with useful employment in all places; in this exhausting climate every one has to seek amusement in their own resources, from sunrise to sunset, during which period there is no moving from home for, at least, eight months out of the twelve. I have not found any occupation so pleasant as talking to my friends, on paper, upon such subjects as may admit of the transfer for their acceptance—and may I not hope, for their gratification also?

The patriarchal manners are so often pictured to me, in many of the every-day occurrences exhibited in the several families I have been most acquainted with in India, that I seem to have gone back to that ancient period with my new-sought home and new friends. Here I find the master and mistress of a family receiving the utmost veneration from their slaves and domestics, whilst the latter are permitted to converse and give their opinions with a freedom (always respectful), that at the first view would lead a stranger to imagine there could be no great inequality of station between the persons conversing. The undeviating kindness to aged servants, no longer capable of rendering their accustomed services; the remarkable attention paid to the convenience and comfort of poor relatives, even to the most remote in consanguinity; the beamings of universal charity; the tenderness of parents; and the implicit obedience of children, are a few of those amiable traits of character from whence my allusions are drawn, and I will add, by which my respect has been commanded. In their reverential homage towards parents, and in affectionate solicitude for the happiness of those venerated authors of their existence, I consider them the most praiseworthy people existing.

On the spirit of philanthropy exhibited in their general charity, I may here remark, that they possess an injunction from their Lawgiver, 'to be universally charitable'.[1] This command is reverenced and obeyed by all who are his faithful followers. They are persuaded that almsgiving propitiates the favour of Heaven, consequently this belief is the inducing medium for clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, supporting the weak, consoling the afflicted, protecting the fatherless, sheltering the houseless traveller, and rendering the ear and the heart alive to the distresses of the poor in all situations. A good Mussulmaun never allows the voice to pass unheeded where the suppliant applies, 'In the name of God', or 'For the love of God'.

I have often been obliged to hear the Mussulmauns accused of an ostentatious display of their frequent acts of charity. It may be so in some instances; human nature has failings common to all complexions. Pride may sometimes open the purse of the affluent to the poor man's petition; but when the needy benefit by the rich, it is unjust to scrutinize the heart's motive, where the act itself alleviates the present sufferings of a fellow-creature.

Imposition is doubtless often practised with success by the indolent, who excite the good feelings of the wealthy by a tale of woe; the sin rests with him who begs unworthily, not with him who relieves the supposed distresses of his poorer neighbour. The very best of human beings will acknowledge they derive benefits from the bounty of their Maker, not because they are deserving, but that 'He is merciful'.

I shall have occasion to detail in my Letters some of the Mussulmaun observances, festivals, &c., which cannot be accomplished without feeding the poor; and, in justice to their general character, be it acknowledged, their liberality is not confined to those stated periods.

The Syaads[2] (Meers[3]) are descendants from Mahumud, the acknowledged Prophet and Lawgiver of the Mussulmauns; and, as might be expected, are peculiar objects of respect and favour amongst the true believers (as those who hold their faith are designated). 'The poor Syaad's family' are the first to be considered when the rich have determined on dispensing gifts in charity. The Syaads, however, are under peculiar restrictions as regards the nature of those gifts which they are permitted to accept. Money obtained by unlawful means, as forbidden in the Khoraun[4] (usury for instance[5]), is deemed polluted, and must neither be offered to, nor accepted by, these 'children of the Prophet'.

The Syaads are the Lords of Mussulmaun society, and every female born to them is a Lady (Begum[6]). Heralds' offices they have none, but genealogy is strictly kept in each Mussulmaun family, who can boast the high privilege of bearing the Prophet's blood in their veins. The children of both sexes are taught, from the time of their first speaking intelligibly, to recount their pedigree, up to Hasan, or Hosein, the two sons of Ali, by his cousin Fatima, the daughter of their Prophet: this forms a striking part of their daily education, whilst they continue in their mother's zeenahnah[7] (lady's apartment); and, from the frequent repetition, is so firmly fixed in the memory, that they have no difficulty in tracing their pedigree whenever called upon to do so, unaided by the manuscript genealogy kept with care in the parental treasury.

This method of retaining lineage is not always a check against impostors; many have taken upon themselves the honourable distinction of the Syaad, without having the slightest claim to the title; but when the cheat is discovered such persons are disgraced, and become aliens to the respectable. So many advantages are enjoyed by Syaads, that it is not surprising there should be some, which have no right, anxious to be numbered with those who are truly the Mussulmaun lords; though such men are taught to believe that, by the usurpation, they shut themselves out from the advantages of their Prophet's intercession at the great day of judgment.

The Syaads are very tenacious in retaining the purity of their race unsullied, particularly with respect to their daughters; a conscientious Syaad regards birth before wealth in negotiations for marriage: many a poor lady, in consequence of this prejudice, lives out her numbered days in single blessedness, although—to their honour be it told—many charitably disposed amongst the rich men of the country have, within my recollection of Indian society, granted from their abundance sufficient sums to defray the expenses of a union, and given the marriage portion, unsolicited, to the daughters of the poorer members of this venerated race. A Syaad rarely speaks of his pecuniary distresses, but is most grateful when relieved.

I am intimately acquainted with a family in which this pride of birth predominates over every advantage of interest. There are three unmarried daughters, remarkable for their industrious habits, morality, and strict observance of their religious duties; they are handsome, well-formed women, polite and sensible, and to all this they add an accomplishment which is not by any means general amongst the females of Hindoostaun, they have been taught by their excellent father to read the Khoraun in Arabic—it is not allowed to be translated,[8]—and the Commentary in Persian. The fame of their superiority has brought many applications from the heads of families possessing wealth, and desirous to secure for their sons wives so eminently endowed, who would waive all considerations of the marriage dowry, for the sake of the Begum who might thus adorn their untitled house. All these offers, however, have been promptly rejected, and the young ladies themselves are satisfied in procuring a scanty subsistence by the labour of their hands. I have known them to be employed in working the jaullie[9] (netting) for courties[10] (a part of the female dress), which, after six days' close application, at the utmost could not realize three shillings each; yet I never saw them other than contented, happy, and cheerful,—a family of love, and patterns of sincere piety.

The titles and distinctions conferred by sovereigns, or the Hon. East India Company in India, as Khaun,[11] Bahadhoor,[12] Nuwaub,[13] &c., are not actually hereditary honours, though often presumed on, and indulged in, by successors. The Syaads, on the contrary, are the Meers and Begums (nobility) throughout their generations to the end of time, or at any rate, with the continuance of the Mussulmaun religion.

Having thus far explained the honourable distinction of the Syaads, I propose giving you some account of the Mahurrum,[14] a celebrated mourning festival in remembrance of their first martyrs, and which occupies the attention of the Mussulmauns annually to a degree of zeal that has always attracted the surprise of our countrymen in India; some of whom, I trust, will not be dissatisfied with the observations of an individual, who having spent many years of her life with those who are chief actors in these scenes, it may be expected, is the better able to explain the nature of that Mahurrum which they see commemorated every year, yet many, perhaps, without comprehending exactly why. Those strong expressions of grief—the sombre cast of countenance,—the mourning garb,—the self-inflicted abstinence, submitted to by the Mussulmaun population, during the ten days set apart for the fulfilment of the mourning festival, all must have witnessed who have been in Hindoostaun for any period.

I must first endeavour to represent the principal causes for the observance of Mahurrum; and for the information of those who have witnessed its celebration, as well as for the benefit of others who have not had the same opportunity, describe the manner of celebrating the event, which occurred more than twelve hundred years ago.

Hasan and Hosein were the two sons of Fatima and Ali, from whom the whole Syaad race have generated; Hasan was poisoned by an emissary of the usurping Calipha's;[15] and Hosein, the last sad victim of the family to the King Yuzeed's[16] fury, suffered a cruel death, after the most severe trials, on the plains of Kraabaallah,[17] on the tenth day of the Arabian month Mahurrum; the anniversary of which catastrophe is solemnized with the most devoted zeal.

This brief sketch constitutes the origin of the festival; but I deem it necessary to detail at some length the history of that period, which may the better explain the motives assigned by the Mussulmauns, for the deep grief exhibited every year, as the anniversary of Mahurrum returns to these faithful followers of their martyred leaders, Hasan and Hosein, who, with their devoted families, suffered innocently by the hands of the guilty.

Yuzeed, the King of Shawm,[18] it appears, was the person in power, amongst the followers of Mahumud, at that early period of Mussulmaun history. Of the Soonie sect,[19] his hatred to the descendants of Mahumud was of the most inveterate kind; jealousy, it is supposed, aided by a very wicked heart, led him to desire the extirpation of the whole race, particularly as he knew that, generally, the Mussulmaun people secretly desired the immediate descendants of their Prophet to be their rulers. They were, however, intimidated by Yuzeed's authority; whilst he, ever fearing the possibility of the Syaads' restoration to their rights, resolved, if possible, on sacrificing the whole family, to secure himself in his illegal power.

Ali had been treacherously murdered through the contrivances of the usurping Calipha; after his death, the whole family removed from Shawm, the capital, to Medina, where they lived some years in tranquillity, making many converts to their faith, and exercising themselves in the service of God and virtuous living. Unostentatious in their habits and manners, they enjoyed the affection of their neighbours, their own good name increasing daily, to the utter dismay of their subtle enemy.

In the course of time, the devout people of Shawm, being heartily tired of Yuzeed's tyrannical rule, and fearing the true faith would be defamed by the excesses and abuses of power committed by him, they were desirous of calling to their aid a leader from the Prophet's family, who would secure, in its original purity, the performance of that religion which Mahumud had taught. Some thousands of respectable Mussulmauns, it is related, signed a petition to Hosein, requesting his immediate presence at Shawm, in order, as the petition stated, 'that the religion his grandsire taught might be supported and promoted'; and declaring 'the voluptuousness and infamy of Yuzeed's life to be so offensive and glaring, that the true faith was endangered by his vicious examples'; and entreating him to accept his lawful rights as 'Emaum'[20] (Leader of the Faithful).

Hosein received the petition, but declined accepting the proposed restitution of his family's rights at that time; yet he held out hopes in his reply, that he might eventually listen to their entreaties, should he be convinced his presence was essential to their welfare; and, as a prelude to this, he sent his cousin Moslem,[21] on whom he could rely, to make personal observation of the real state of things at Shawm; expecting to learn, from his matured knowledge, the real causes of complaint, and the wishes of the people, and by whose report he would be guided, as to his final acceptance or rejection of the proposed measure for his becoming their leader.

Moslem, accompanied by his two sons, mere youths, left Medina on this important mission, and having accomplished the tedious march without accident or interruption, he delivered Hosein's letters to those persons of consequence in Shawm, who were at the head of the party petitioning his appearance there, and who proffered their influence and support for the recovery of the rights and privileges so long withheld from the descendants of Mahumud.

Moslem was kindly greeted by them, and multitudes flocked to his quarters, declaring Hosein the lawful leader of true Mussulmauns. Elated with these flattering indications, he too promptly despatched his messengers to Hosein, urging his immediate return to Shawm.

In the mean time, and long before the messengers could reach Medina, Yuzeed, learning the state of things in the capital, was seriously alarmed and greatly enraged; he issued orders for the seizure of Moslem and his children, and desiring to have them brought to his presence, offered immense sums of money for their capture. The friends of Moslem, however, succeeded, for a time, in secreting his person from King Yuzeed's emissaries, trusting the darkness of night would enable him to escape. But the slaves and dependants of the tyrant being despatched into all quarters of the city, Moslem's retreat was eventually discovered; and, through the influence of a purse of gold, his person was given up to the King's partizans.

The unfortunate agent of Hosein had confided the charge of his two sons to the Kauzy[22] of the city, when the first report reached him of the tyrant Yuzeed's fury. This faithful Kauzy, as the night advanced, intended to get the poor boys conveyed to the halting place of a Kaarawaun,[23] which he knew was but a few miles off, on their route for Medina. The guide, to whom the youths were intrusted, either by design or mistake, took the wrong road; and, after wandering through the dreary night, and suffering many severe trials, they were taken prisoners by the cruel husband of a very amiable female, who had compassionately, at first, given them shelter as weary travellers only; but, on discovering whose children they were, she had secreted them in her house. Her husband, however, having discovered the place of their concealment, and identified them as the sons of Moslem, cruelly murdered the innocent boys for the sake of the reward offered for their heads. In his fury and thirst for gold, this wicked husband of the kind-hearted woman spared not his own wife and son, who strove by their united efforts, alternately pleading and resisting, to save the poor boys from his barbarous hands.

This tragic event is conveyed into pathetic verse, and as often as it is repeated in the families of the Mussulmauns, tears of fresh sympathy are evinced, and bewailings renewed. This forms the subject for one day's celebration during Mahurrum; the boys are described to have been most beautiful in person, and amiable in disposition.

After enduring ignominy and torture, and without even being brought to trial, Moslem was cast from a precipice, by Yuzeed's orders, and his life speedily terminated, to glut the vengeance of the tyrant King.

As the disastrous conclusion of Moslem's mission had not reached the ear of Hosein, he, elated with the favourable reception of his cousin, and the prospect of being received at Shawm in peace and good will, had without delay commenced his journey, accompanied by the females of his family, his relations, and a few steady friends who had long devoted themselves to his person and cause. The written documents of that remarkable period notice, that the whole party of Hosein, travelling from Medina towards Shawm, consisted only of seventy-two souls: Hosein having no intention to force his way to the post of leader, had not deemed it necessary to set out with an army to aid him, which he undoubtedly might have commanded by his influence with the people professing 'the Faith'.

Yuzeed, in the mean time, having by his power destroyed Moslem and the two youths his sons, and receiving positive intelligence that Hosein had quitted Medina to march for Shawm, as his fears suggested, with an army of some magnitude, he ordered out an immense force to meet Hosein on the way, setting a price on his head, and proclaiming promises of honours and rewards, of the most tempting nature, to the fortunate man who should succeed in the arduous enterprise.

The first detachment of the Shawmies (as they are designated in the manuscript of Arabia), under a resolute chief named Hurrh,[24] fell in with Hosein's camp, one day's march beyond the far-famed ground, amongst Mussulmauns, of Kraabaallah, or Hurth Maaree,[25] as it was originally called.

Hurrh's heart was subdued when he entered the tent of the peaceable Hosein, in whose person he discovered the exact resemblance of the Prophet; and perceiving that his small camp indicated a quiet family party journeying on their way, instead of the formidable force Yuzeed's fears had anticipated, this chief was surprised and confounded, confessed his shame to Hosein that he had been induced to accept the command of the force despatched against the children of the Prophet, and urged, in mitigation of his offences, that he had long been in Yuzeed's service, whose commission he still bore; but his heart now yearning to aid, rather than persecute the Prophet's family, he resolved on giving them an opportunity to escape the threatened vengeance of their bitterest enemy. With this view, he advised Hosein to fall with his party into the rear of his force, until the main body of the Shawmies had passed by; and as they were then on the margin of a forest, there to separate and secrete themselves till the road was again clear, and afterwards to take a different route from the proposed one to Shawm.

Hosein felt, as may be supposed, grateful to his preserver; and, following his directions, succeeded in reaching the confines of Kraabaallah unmolested.

The ancient writings of Arabia say, Mahumud had predicted the death of Hosein, by the hands of men professing to be of 'the true faith', at this very place Kraabaallah, or Hurth Maaree.

Hosein and his family having concluded their morning devotions, he first inquired and learned the name of the place on which their tents were pitched, and then imparted the subject of his last night's dream, 'that his grandsire had appeared to him, and pronounced that his soul would be at peace with him ere that day closed'. Again he fell on his knees in devout prayer, from which he rose only to observe the first warnings of an approaching army, by the thick clouds of dust which darkened the horizon; and before the evening closed upon the scene, Hosein, with every male of his small party capable of bearing arms, had been hurried to their final rest. One son of Hosein's, insensible from fever at the time, was spared from the sacrifice, and, with the females and young children, taken prisoners to the King's palace at Shawm.

The account given by historians of this awful battle, describes the courage and intrepidity of Hosein's small band, in glowing terms of praise; having fought singly, and by their desperate bravery 'each arm (they say) levelled his hundreds with their kindred dust ere his own gave way to the sway of death'.

Amongst the number of Hosein's brave defenders was a nephew, the son of Hasan: this young man, named Cossum,[26] was the affianced husband of Hosein's favourite daughter, Sakeena Koobraah;[27] and previous to his going to the combat on that eventful day, Hosein read the marriage lines between the young couple, in the tent of the females. I mention this here, as it points to one particular part of the celebration of Mahurrum, which I shall have occasion to mention in due order, wherein all the outward forms of the wedding ceremony are strictly performed, annually.

During the whole of this terrible day, at Kraabaallah, the family party of Hosein had been entirely deprived of water; and the river Fraught[28] (Euphrates) being blockaded by their enemies, they suffered exceedingly from thirst. The handsome Abass,[29] another nephew of Hosein, and his standard-bearer, made many efforts to procure water for the relief of the almost famishing females; he had, at one attempt, succeeded in filling the mushukh,[30] when, retreating from the river, he was discovered by the enemy, was pursued and severely wounded, the mushukh pierced by arrows, and the water entirely lost ere he could reach the camp.

In remembrance of this privation of the sufferers at Kraabaallah, every good Mussulmaun, at Mahurrum, distributes sherbet in abundance, to all persons who choose to accept this their favourite beverage (sugar and water, with a little rosewater, or kurah,[31] to flavour it); and some charitable females expend large sums in milk, to be distributed in the public streets; for these purposes, there are neat little huts of sirrakee[32] (a reed, or grass, resembling bright straw) erected by the road side of the

Mussulmauns' houses; they are called saabeels,[33] where the red earthen cups of milk, sherbet, or pure water are seen ranged in rows, for all who choose to call for drink.

Hosein, say their historians, was the last of the party who suffered on the day of battle; he was surrounded in his own camp—where, by the usage of war, at that time, they had no right to enter—and when there was not one friendly arm left to ward the blow. They relate 'that his body was literally mangled, before he was released from his unmerited sufferings'. He had mounted his favourite horse, which, as well as himself, was pierced by arrows innumerable; together they sank on the earth from loss of blood, the cowardly spearmen piercing his wounded body as if in sport; and whilst, with his last breath, 'Hosein prayed for mercy on his destroyers, Shimeear[34] ended his sufferings by severing the already prostrate head from the mutilated trunk'.—'Thus they sealed (say those writers) the lasting disgrace of a people, who, calling themselves Mussulmauns, were the murderers of their Prophet's descendants.'

This slight sketch gives but the outline of those events which are every year commemorated amongst the zealous followers of Ali, the class denominated Sheahs.

The Mussulmaun people, I must here observe, are divided into two distinct sects, viz. the Sheahs and the Soonies. The former believe Ali and his descendants were the lawful leaders after Mahumud; the latter are persuaded that the Caliphas, as Aboubuker, Omir, &c., were the leaders to be accredited 'lawful'; but of this I shall speak more fully in another Letter.

Perhaps the violence of party spirit may have acted as an inducement to the Sheahs, for the zealous annual observance of this period, so interesting to that sect; whatever the motive, we very often find the two sects hoard up their private animosities and dislikes until the return of Mahurrum, which scarcely ever passes over, in any extensively populated city of Hindoostaun, without a serious quarrel, often terminating in bloodshed.[35]

I could have given a more lengthened account of the events which led to the solemnization of this fast, but I believe the present is sufficient to explain the motives by which the Mussulmauns are actuated, and my next Letter must be devoted to the description of the rites performed upon the celebration of these events in India.

P.S. I have a memorandum in my collection which may here be copied as its proper place.

From Mecca, 'The Holy City', to Medina the distance is twelve stages (a day's march is one stage, about twenty miles of English measurement). From Medina to Kraabaallah there are twenty-one stages; this distance is travelled only by those who can endure great difficulties; neither water nor provisions are to be met with on the whole journey, excepting at one halt, the name of which is Shimmaar. From Kraabaallah to Koofah is two stages.

In the vicinity of Koofah[36] stands Mount Judee[37] (Judea), on which is built, over the remains of Ali, the mausoleum called Nudghiff Usheruff.[38] On this Mount, it is said, Adam and Noah were buried. Ali being aware of this, gave directions to his family and friends, that whenever his soul should be recalled from earth, his mortal remains were to be deposited near those graves venerated and held sacred 'by the faithful'. The ancient writers of Arabia authorise the opinion that Ali's body was entombed by the hands of his sons, Hasan and Hosein, who found the earth open to receive their sire, and which closed immediately on his remains being deposited.

Here, too, it is believed Noah's ark rested after the Deluge. When pilgrims to Mecca make their zeearut[39] (all sacred visits are so called) to this Mount, they offer three prayers, in memory of Adam, Noah, and All.

The grave of Eve is also frequently visited by pilgrims, which is said to be situated near Jeddah; this, however, is not considered an indispensable duty, but, as they say, prompted by 'respect for the Mother of men'.[40]

These remarks, and many others of an interesting nature, I have been favoured with from the most venerable aged man I ever knew, Meer Hadjee Shaah,[41] the revered father of my excellent husband; who having performed the Hadje[42] (pilgrimage) three several times, at different periods of his eventful life—returning after each pilgrimage to his home in Lucknow—and being a person of strict veracity, with a remarkably intelligent mind and retentive memory, I have profited largely by his information, and derived from it both amusement and instruction, through many years of social intercourse. When he had numbered more than eighty years he dwelt with hope on again performing the Hadje, where it was his intention to rest his earthly substance until the great day of restitution, and often expressed his wishes to have me and mine to share with him the pilgrimage he desired to make. But this was not allowed to his prayer; his summons arrived rather unexpectedly to those who loved and revered him for virtues rarely equalled; happily for him, his pure soul was prepared to meet his Creator, in whose service he had passed this life, with all humility, and in whose mercy alone his hopes for the future were centred.

[1] 'Whatsoever alms ye shall give, of a truth God knoweth it…. Give ye your alms openly? it is well. Do ye conceal them and give them to the poor? This, too, will be of advantage to you, and will do away your sins: and God is cognizant of your actions' (*Koran*, ii. 274-5).

[2] *Sayyid*, 'lord', 'chief, the class of Musalmans who claim descent from Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet, and 'Ali, his cousin-german and adopted son; they are divided into two branches descended from Hasan and Husain, sons of 'Ali and Fatimah.

[3] *Mir*, a contraction of *Amir*, 'lord'.

[4] *Koran, Qur'an*.

[5] 'They who swallow down usury shall arise in the resurrection only as he ariseth whom Satan hath infected by his touch' (*Koran*, ii. 276). But this is rather theory than practice, and many ingenious methods are adopted to avoid the prohibition.

[6] *Begam*, feminine of *Beg*, 'lord', used to denote a Sayyid lady, like Khanam among Pathans.

[7] Here, as elsewhere, *zenanah*, *zananah*, Persian *zan*, 'woman'.

[8] This is incorrect. The Koran has been translated into various languages, but the translation is always interlineary with the original text. In Central Asia the Musalman conquerors allowed the Koran to be recited in Persian, instead of Arabic, in order that it might be intelligible to all (Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, 183).

[9] *Jali*.

[10] *Kurti*, a loose, long-sleeved jacket of muslin or net, among rich women embroidered on the neck and shoulders with gold, and draped down to the ankles in full, loose folds. It is made of red or other light-coloured fabrics for girls and married women; dark blue, bronze, or white for old ladies; bronze or black for widows.

[11] *Khan*, 'lord', 'prince', specially applied to persons of Mughal or Pathan descent.

[12] *Bahadur*, 'champion', a Mongol term; see Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*[2], 48 ff.

[13] *Nawab*, 'a deputy, delegate': the Anglo-Indian Nabob (ibid., 610 ff.).

[14] *Muharram*, 'that which is forbidden', the first month of the Musalman year, the first ten days of which are occupied with this mourning festival.

[15] By his wife Ja'dah, who was suborned to commit the deed by Yazid.

[16] Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah, the second Caliph of the house of Umaiyah, who reigned from A.D. 679 to 683. Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, ed. W. Smith, vi. 278) calls him 'a feeble and dissolute youth'.

[17] Kerbala, Karbala, a city of Iraq, 50 miles south-west of Baghdad, and about 6 miles from the Euphrates.

[18] Syria.

[19] *Sunni*, Ahlu's-Sunnah, 'one of the Path', a traditionalist. The Sunnis accept the first four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Usman, 'Ali, as the rightful successors of Muhammad, and follow the six authentic books of the traditions. The Shi'ahs, 'followers' of 'Ali, maintain that he was the first legitimate Imam or Caliph, i.e. successor of the Prophet.

For a full account of the martyrdom of Husain see Simon Ockley, *History of the Saracens* (1848), 287 ff.; Sir L. Pelly, *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain* (1879), Preface, v ff.

[20] *Imam.*

[21] Muslim.

[22] *Qazi*, a Muhammadan law officer.

[23] *Karwan*, a caravan.

[24] al-Hurr.

[25] This term is obscure. Jaffur Shurreef (*Qanoon-e-Islam*, 107) says the plain of the martyrdom was called 'Mareea'. For 'Hurth' Prof. E.G. Browne suggests *hirth*, 'a ploughed field', or *ard*, 'land'. Sir C. Lyall suggests Al-hirah, the old Arabian capital which stood near the site of the later Kufah.

[26] Qasim.

[27] Sakinah, Hebrew Shechinah; Koobraah, *Kibriya*, 'noble'.

[28] The Euphrates is called in Sumerian *pura-num*, 'Great water', whence Purat, Purattu in Semitic Babylonian; Perath in Hebrew; Frat or Furat in Arabic.

[29] 'Abbas, son of 'Ali.

[30] *Mashk*, *Mashak*, the Anglo-Indian Mussuck, a leathern skin for conveying water, in general use amongst Musalmans at this day in India; it is composed of the entire skin of a goat, properly prepared. When filled with water it resembles a huge porpoise, on the back of the beeshtie [Bhishti] (water-carrier). [*Author.*]

[31] *Kora*, the fresh juice of *Aloe vera*, said to be cathartic and cooling.

[32] *Sirki* (*Saccharum ciliare*).

[33] *Sabil*: see Burton, *Pilgrimage*, Memorial ed., i. 286.

[34] Shimar, whose name now means 'contemptible' among Shi'ahs.

[35] This statement is too wide. 'Among Muhammadans themselves there is very little religious discussion, and Sunnis and Shi'ahs, who are at such deadly feud in many parts of Asia, including the Punjab and Kashmir, have, in Oudh, always freely intermarried' (H.C. Irwin, *The Garden of India*, 45).

[36] Kufah, four miles from Najaf, the capital of the Caliph 'Ali, which fell into decay when the government was removed to Baghdad.

[37] Confused with Al-judi, Mt. Ararat, on which the Ark rested.—*Koran*, xi. 46.

[38] Najaf al Sharif, or Mashhad 'Ali, 50 miles south of Karbala, the tomb and shrine of 'Ali.

[39] *Ziyarat*, 'visitation', especially to the tomb of the Prophet or that of a Muhammadan saint. The pilgrim says, not 'I have visited the Prophet's tomb', but 'I have visited the Prophet'. (Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 305.)

[40] The grave is said to be nine yards long: according to others, much longer. See the flippant remark of Burton, ibid., ii. 273 ff.

[41] Mir Haji Shah.

[42] *Hajj*, 'setting out'.

LETTER II

Celebration of Mahurrum.—The Tazia.—Mussulmaun Cemeteries.—An Emaum-baarah.—Piety of the ladies.—Self-inflicted abstinence and privations endured by each sex.—Instances of the devotional zeal of the Mussulmauns.—Attempted infringement on their religious formalities.—The Resident at Lucknow.—Enthusiastic ardour of the poor.—Manner of celebrating the Mahurrum in opposition to the precepts of the Khoraun.—Mosque and Emaum-baarah contrasted.—The supposition of Mussulmauns practising idolatry confuted.

My former Letter prepares you for the celebration of Mahurrum, the observance of which is at this time going forward here (at Lucknow) with all that zealous emulative spirit and enthusiasm which I have before remarked the Mussulmaun population of India entertain for their Emaums (leaders), and their religion.

This annual solemn display of the regret and veneration they consider due to the memory of departed excellence, commences on the first day of the Moon (Mahurrum). The Mussulmaun year has twelve moons; every third year one moon is added, which regulation, I fancy, renders their years, in a chronological point of view, very nearly equal with those of Europe. Their day commences and ends when the stars are first visible after sunset.

The first day of Mahurrum invariably brings to my recollection the strongly impressed ideas of 'The Deserted Village'. The profound quiet and solemn stillness of an extensively populated native city, contrasted with the incessant bustle usual at all other times, are too striking to Europeans to pass by unheeded. This cessation of the animated scene, however, is not of long duration; the second day presents to the view vast multitudes of people parading backwards and forwards, on horseback, in palkies, and on foot, through the broad streets and roadways, arrayed in their several mourning garbs, speeding their way to the Emaum-baarahs[1] of the great men, and the houses of friends, to pay the visit of respect (zeearut), wherever a Tazia is set up to the remembrance of Hasan and Hosein.

The word Tazia[2] signifies grief. The term is applied to a representation of the mausoleum at Kraabaallah, erected by their friends and followers, over the remains of Hasan and Hosein. It is formed of every variety of material, according to the wealth, rank, or preference, of the person exhibiting, from the purest silver down to bamboo and paper, strict attention being always paid to preserve the model of Kraabaallah, in the exact pattern with the original building. Some people have them of ivory, ebony, sandal-wood, cedar, &c., and I have seen some beautifully wrought in silver filigree. The handsomest of the kind, to my taste, is in the possession of his Majesty the King of Oude, composed of green glass, with brass mouldings, manufactured in England (by whom I could not learn). All these expensive Tazias are fixtures, but there are temporary ones required for the out-door ceremony, which, like those available to the poor and middling classes, are composed of bamboo frames, over which is fixed coloured uberuck[3] (lapis specularum, or tulk); these are made in the bazaar, of various sizes and qualities, to suit the views of purchasers, from two rupees to two hundred each.

The more common Tazias are conveyed in the procession on the tenth day, and finally deposited with funeral rites in the public burial-grounds, of which there are several outside the town. These cemeteries are denominated Kraabaallah,[4] and the population of a large city may be presumed on by the number of these dispersed in the suburbs. They do not bury their dead in the vicinity of a mosque, which is held too sacred to be allowed the pollution. Any one having only touched a dead body, must bathe prior to entering the mosque, or performing their usual prayer-service at home;—such is the veneration they entertain for the name of God.

The opulent people of Mussulmaun society have an Emaum-baarah erected in the range of buildings exclusively denominated murdanah[5] (men's abode). The habitation of all Mussulmauns being composed of separate departments for the males and the females, communicating by private entrances, as will be explained hereafter.

The Emaum-baarah is a sacred place, erected for the express purpose of commemorating Mahurrum; the founder not unfrequently intends this also as the mausoleum for himself and family. But we generally find Mukhburrahs[6] (mausoleums) built in conspicuous situations, for the remains of kings, princes, nobles, and sainted persons. Of the latter, many are visited, at stated periods, by the multitude, with religious veneration, the illiterate attaching considerable importance to the annual pilgrimage to them; and where—to secure the influence of the particular saint's spirit, in furthering their views—

mothers present their children, in numbers beyond all calculation; and each having something to hope for who visits the shrine, presents offerings of money and sweetmeats, which become the property of the person in charge of the tomb, thus yielding him a profitable sinecure, in proportion as the saint is popular amongst the ignorant.

An Emaum-baarah is a square building, generally erected with a cupola top, the dimensions guided by the circumstances of the founder. The floor is matted with the date-leaf mats, in common use in India, on which is spread a shutteringhie[7] (cotton carpet), and over this a clean white calico covering, on which the assembled party are seated, during the several periods of collecting together to remember their leaders: these meetings are termed Mudgelluss[8] (mourning assemblies). It would be esteemed indecorous or disrespectful to the Emaums, if any one in error called these assemblies Moollakhaut,[9] the usual term for mere worldly visiting.

The Tazia is placed against the wall on the side facing Mecca, under a canopy of rich embroidery. A reading-desk or pulpit (mhembur[10]) is placed in a convenient situation, for the reader to face Mecca, and his voice to be heard by the whole assembly of people; it is constructed of silver, ivory, ebony, &c. to correspond with the Tazia, if possible: the steps are covered sometimes with gold-cloth, or broad-cloth of black, or green,[11] if a Syaad's property, being the colour worn by that race for mourning. The shape of a mhembur is a flight of steps with a flat top, without any railing or enclosed place; the reader, in his recitings, occasionally sitting on the steps, or standing, as may be most convenient to himself.

On the walls of the Emaum-baarah, mirrors and looking-glasses are fixed in suitable situations to give effect to the brilliant display of light, from the magnificent chandeliers suspended from the cupola and cornices. The nobles and the wealthy are excited with a desire to emulate each other in the splendour of their display on these occasions;—all the mirrors, glass, lustres, chandeliers, &c. are brought together to this place, from their several stations in the mansion; and it is due to them to admit the effect to be often imposingly grand, and the blaze of light splendid. I have frequently been reminded in these scenes of the visionary castles conjured to the imagination, whilst reading 'The Arabian Nights' Entertainments'.

On each side the Tazia—the whole length of the wall—banners are ranged, in great variety of colour and fabric; some of them are costly and splendid. I have seen many constructed of the richest embroidery, on silk grounds, of gold and silver, with massy gold fringes, cords, and tassels; the staff is cased with gold or silver, worked into figures of birds and other animals, in every variety; the top of which has a crest, in some a spread hand,[12] in others a sort of plume, and not unfrequently a crest resembling a grenade, formed of the precious metals, and set with stones of great value.

On the base of the Tazia the several articles are placed conceived likely to have been used by Hosein at Kraabaallah; a turban of gold or silver tissue, a splendid sword and belt, the handle and hilt set with precious stones, a shield, the Arabian bow and arrows. These ancient emblems of royalty are indispensable in order to do honour to Hosein, in the view

they take of his sovereign right to be the head or leader of the true Mussulmauns. Wax lights, red and green, are also placed in great numbers about its base, in silver or glass candlesticks; and censers of gold and silver, burning incense perpetually during Mahurrum. Many other minor tributes to the Emaums are discovered near the Tazia, as choice fruits and garlands of sweet-scented flowers, the offerings of ladies of the family to their relative's Tazia.

Amongst the poorer classes of the people an equal proportion of zealous spirit is evinced; and according to their several abilities, so they commemorate the period, interesting alike to all. Those who cannot compass the real splendour of an Emaum-baarah, are satisfied with an imitative one in the best hall their habitation affords; and, where mirrors and chandeliers are not available, they are content to do honour to the Emaums with lamps of uberuck, which in truth are pleasing substitutes at a small price: these lamps are made in a variety of pretty shapes, curiously painted, and ingeniously ornamented with cut paper; they burn oil in them, and, when well arranged, and diversified with their wonted taste, produce a good light, and pleasing effect.

The banners of Hosein, in the houses of the poor, are formed of materials according to their humble means, from tinsel imitations down to dyed muslin; and a similar difference is to be perceived in their selection of the metal of which their crests are made.

Mourning assemblies are held in the Emaum-baarahs twice every day during Mahurrum; those of the evening, however, are the most attractive, and have the fullest attendance of visitors. The master of the house, at the appointed hour, takes his seat on the floor near the pulpit, surrounded by the males of his family and intimate friends, and the crowd of strangers arrange themselves—wherever there is sitting room—without impeding the view of the Tazia.

One of the most popular Maulvees[13] of the age is engaged to recite the particular portion appointed for each day, from the manuscript documents, called Dhie Mudgelluss,[14] in the Persian language. This work is in ten parts and contains a subject for each day's service, descriptive of the life and sufferings of the Emaums, their friends, and children, particularly as regards the eventful period of Mahurrum in which they were engaged. It is, I am assured, a pathetic, fine composition, and a faithful narrative of each particular circumstance in the history of their leaders, the heroic bravery of their friends, &c. They are particularly anxious to engage an eloquent reader for this part of the performance, who by his impressive manner compels his hearers to sympathise in the affecting incidents which are recited by him.

I have been present when the effect produced by the superior oratory and gestures of a Maulvee has almost terrified me, the profound grief, evinced in his tears and groans, being piercing and apparently sincere. I have even witnessed blood issuing from the breast of sturdy men, who beat themselves simultaneously as they ejaculated the names 'Hasan!' 'Hosein!'[15] for ten minutes, and occasionally during a longer period, in that part of the service called Mortem.[16]

The portion of Dhie Mudgelluss concluded, sherbet is handed round to the assembly; and as they voluntarily abstain from luxuries at this season, a substitute for pawn[17]—the green leaf in general use amongst the natives—has been introduced, consisting of dried coffee, cocoa-nut shreds, betel-nut, cardimuns,[18] dunyah,[19] and a proportionate quantity of tobacco-leaf and lime; these are mixed together and handed to the visitors, on small silver trays. The hookha[20] is introduced to the superiors of the assembly; you are perhaps aware that inferiors do not smoke in the presence of superiors without their command or permission.

This ceremony terminated, the Murseeah[21] is chanted, by several well-practised voices, with good effect. This part of the service is, perhaps, the most impressive, as the very ignorant, even, can comprehend every word,—the Murseeah being in the Hindoostanic tongue, a poetical composition of great merit, and embracing all the subjects they meet to commemorate. The whole assembly rise up afterwards, and, as with one voice, recount the names of the lawful leaders after Mahumud, entreating blessings and peace to their souls. They then repeat the names of the hated usurpers (Caliphas), on whose memory they invoke curses, &c. Mortem follows, beating of breasts in unison with the voices, and uttering the names of Hasan and Hosein; this performance concludes each day's Mudgelluss, either of the morning or evening.

The ladies celebrate the returning season of Mahurrum with as much spirit and zeal as the confinement, in which they exist, can possibly admit of. There are but few, and those chiefly princesses, who have Emaum-baarahs at command, within the boundary of the zeenahnah; the largest and best apartment in their establishment is therefore selected for the purpose of an Emaum-baarah, into which none but females are admitted, excepting the husband, father, son, or brother, of the lady; who having, on this occasion, full liberty to invite her female acquaintance, those who are her nearest male relatives even are not admitted until previous notice is given, in order that the female guests may secrete themselves from the sight of these relatives of their hostess.

In commemorating this remarkable event in Mussulmaun history, the expressions of grief, manifested by the ladies, are far greater, and appear to me more lasting than with the other sex; indeed, I never could have given credit to the extent of their bewailings, without witnessing, as I have done for many years, the season for tears and profound grief return with the month of Mahurrum. In sorrowing for the martyred Emaums, they seem to forget their private griefs; the bereavement of a beloved object even is almost overlooked in the dutiful remembrance of Hasan and Hosein at this period; and I have had opportunities of observing this triumph of religious feeling in women, who are remarkable for their affectionate attachment to their children, husbands, and parents;—they tell me, 'We must not indulge selfish sorrows of our own, whilst the Prophet's family alone have a right to our tears'.

The religious zeal of these people is evinced, likewise, in a stern, systematic, line of privations, during the period of Mahurrum; no one is obliged by any law or command; it is voluntary abstinence on the part of each individual—they impose it on themselves, out of pure pity and respect for their Emaums' well-remembered sufferings. Every thing

which constitutes comfort, luxury, or even convenience at other times, on these occasions are rigidly laid aside. The pallungh and the charpoy[22] (the two descriptions of bedsteads in general use), on which the females love to lounge for some hours in the day and night, are removed from their standings, and, in lieu of this comfort, they take their rest on a common date mat, on the floor. The musnud,[23] and all its cushioned luxuries, give place, on this occasion, to the simply matted floor. The indulgence in choice dainties, at other times so necessary to their happiness, is now foregone, and their meal limited, throughout Mahurrum, to the coarsest food—such as barley bread, rice and peas boiled together (called kutcher),[24] without even the usual additions to make it palatable ketcherie,[25] as ghee, salt, pepper, and spices; these ingredients being considered by the zealous females too indulgent and luxurious for humble mourners during Muhurrum.

The pawn leaf, another luxury of no small moment to Asiatic tastes, is now banished for the ten days' mourning. A very poor substitute has been adopted, in the mixture described at the gentlemen's assembly—it is called goattur.[26] The truth is, their health would suffer from any long disuse of tobacco-leaf, lime, and a bitter gum,[27] which are in general use with the pawn; the latter is of a warm aromatic nature, and imparts a fine flavour to the other ingredients; but, as it is considered a great indulgence to eat pawn, they abstain from it altogether during Mahurrum;—the mixture, they say, is only allowed for health's sake.

When visitors call on the Mussulmaun ladies at Mahurrum, the goattur is presented on trays, accompanied by bags, neatly embroidered in silver and gold, of many different shapes and patterns, mostly their own work and invention; they are called buttooah[28] and jhaumdanies.[29]

The variety of ornaments, which constitute the great delight of all classes of females in India, are entirely laid aside, from the first hour of Mahurrum, until the period for mourning concludes. I never heard of any people so thoroughly attached to ornaments as the females of India are generally. They are indulged in this foible—pardonable it may be—by their husbands and parents. The wealthiness of a family may often be judged by a single glance at the principal lady of the zeenahnah, who seldom omits doing honour to her husband, by a full display of the precious metals, with a great variety of gems or jewels on ordinary occasions. The men of all ranks are proud of their wives' finery; even the poorest hold in derision all ornament that is not composed of sterling metal, of which they seem excellent judges. The massy chains of gold or silver, the solid bangles for the arms and ancles, the nut[30] (nose-ring) of gold wire, on which is strung a ruby between two pearls, worn only by married women; the joshun[31] (armlet), of silver or gold, often set with precious stones; the many rings for the fingers, thumbs, and toes, form the daily dress of a lady;—but I must not digress further. These are all removed from the person, as soon as the moon is seen, when the first day of Mahurrum commences; the hair is unloosed from its usual confinement, and allowed to flow in disorder about the person; the coloured pyjaamahs[32] and deputtahs[33] are removed, with every other article of their usual costume, for a suit that, with them, constitutes mourning—some choose black, others grey, slate, or green, and the widow wears white from the day her husband dies.

A widow never alters her style of dress, neither does she wear a single ornament, during her widowhood, which generally lasts with her life. I never heard of one single instance, during my twelve years' residence amongst them, of a widow marrying again—they have no law to prohibit it; and I have known some ladies, whose affianced husbands died before the marriage was concluded, who preferred a life of solitude and prayer, although many other overtures were made.[34]

Many of the rigidly zealous, among the females, mortify themselves by wearing their suit of mourning, during the ten days, without changing; the dress is worn next the skin, and, in very warm weather, must be comfortless after the first day—but so it is; and so many are the varieties of self-inflicted privations, at this period, that my letter might be filled with the observations I have made. I cannot, however, omit to mention my old woman-servant (ayah[35]), whose mode of abstinence, in remembrance of Hosein, is rigidly severe; my influence does not prevail in dissuading her, although I fear the consequences to her health will be seriously felt if she persist in the fulfilment of her self-imposed trial. This poor old creature resolves on not allowing one drop of water, or any liquid, to pass her lips during the ten days' mourning; as she says, 'her Emaum, Hosein, and his family, suffered from thirst at Kraabaallah, why should such a creature as she is be indulged with water?' This shows the temper of the people generally; my ayah is a very ignorant old woman, yet she respects her Emaum's memory.[36]

The Tazia, you are to understand, graces the houses of all good Mussulmauns in India, who are not of the sect called Soonies. This model of their Emaum's tomb is an object of profound respect. Hindoos, even, on approaching the shrine, bow their heads with much solemn gravity; I often fancied they mistook the Tazia for a Bootkhanah[37] (the house of an idol).

It is creditable to the Mussulmauns, that they do not restrict any profession of people from visiting their assemblies; there is free admission granted when the Emaum-baarah is first lighted up, until the hour of performing the service, when strangers, that is the multitude, are civilly requested to retire. Every one is expected, on entering the outward verandah, to leave their shoes at the threshold of the sanctuary;[38] none but Europeans have any occasion to be reminded of this, as it is a well known and general observance with all degrees of natives in Asia. The servants, in charge of the Emaum-baarah, are responsible for the due observance of respect to the place, and when any foreigners are advancing, they are politely requested to leave their shoes outside; which must be complied with, or they cannot possibly be admitted.

Some few years since, a party of young gentlemen, from cantonments, had made up their minds to evade the necessity for removing their boots, on the occasion of a visit to one of the great men's Emaum-baarahs, at a Native city; they had provided themselves with white socks, which they drew over their boots before leaving their palkies. The cheat was discovered by the servants in attendance, after they had been admitted; they made a precipitate retreat to avoid the consequences of a representation to the Resident, by the proprietor of the Emaum-baarah; who, hearing of the circumstance, made all possible

inquiry, without, however, discovering the names of the gentlemen, who had thus, in his opinion, violated the sanctuary.

The Natives are aware that the Resident sets the bright example of conforming to the observances of the people, over whom he is placed as governor and guardian; and that he very properly discountenances every attempt of his countrymen to infringe on their rights, prejudices, or privileges; and they have, to my knowledge, always looked up to him as to a parent and a friend, from the first to the last day of his exalted station amongst them. Many a tear marked the regret of the Natives, when their best, their kindest, earthly friend quitted the city he had blessed by his presence; and to the latest page of their history, his memory will doubtless be cherished with sincere veneration and respectful attachment.[39]

The poor people vie with their rich neighbours, in making a brilliant light in their little halls containing the Tazia; the very poorest are liberal in the expenditure of oil and tallow candles—I might say extravagantly so, but for the purity of their intentions, supposing it to be a duty—and they certainly manifest their zeal and respect to the utmost of their power; although many, to my knowledge, live all the year round on the very coarsest fare, to enable them to show this reverence to their Emaum's memory.

The ladies assemble, in the evening, round the Tazia they have set up in their purdahed privacy—female friends, slaves, and servants, surrounding the mistress of the house, in solemn gravity.

The few females who have been educated are in great request at this season; they read the Dhie Mudgelluss, and chant the Musseeah with good effect. These women, being hired for the purpose, are detained during the ten days; when the Mahurrum ceases, they are dismissed to their own homes, loaded with the best gifts the good lady their employer can conveniently spare, commensurate with the services performed. These educated females are chiefly daughters of poor Syaads, who have not been married for the lack of a dowry; they live devoutly in the service of God, according to their faith. They are sometimes required, in the families of the nobility, to teach the Khoraun to the young ladies, and, in that capacity, they are called Oustaardie, or more familiarly Artoojee.[40]

As I have mentioned before, the Musseeah narrative of the sufferings at Kraabaallah is a really pathetic and interesting composition; the work being conveyed in the language of the country, every word is understood, and very deeply felt, by the females in all these assemblies, who, having their hearts softened by the emphatic chantings of the readers, burst into violent tears and sobbings of the most heart-rending description. As in the gentlemen's assembly, they conclude with Mortem, in which they exercise themselves until they are actually exhausted; indeed, many delicate females injure their health by the violence and energy of their exertions, which they nevertheless deem a most essential duty to perform, at all hazards, during the continuance of Mahurrum.

This method of keeping Mahurrum is not in strict obedience to the Mahumudan laws; in which code may be found prohibitions against all violent and excessive grief—tearing the hair, or other expressions of ungovernable sorrow.[41]

I have observed that the Maulvees, Moollahs,[42] and devoutly religious persons, although mixing with the enthusiasts on these occasions, abstain from the violent exhibition of sorrows which the uninformed are so prone to indulge in. The most religious men of that faith feel equal, perhaps greater sympathy, for the sufferings of the Emaums, than those who are less acquainted with the precepts of the Khoraun; they commemorate the Mahurrum without parade or ostentatious display, and apparently wear mourning on their hearts, with their garb, the full term of forty days—the common period of mourning for a beloved object; but these persons never join in Mortem, beating breasts, or other outward show of sadness, although they are present when it is exercised; but their quiet grief is evidently more sincere.

I have conversed with many sensible men of the Mussulmaun persuasion on the subject of celebrating Mahurrum, and from all I can learn, the pompous display is grown into a habit, by a long residence amongst people, who make a merit of showy parades at all their festivals. Foreign Mussulmauns are equally surprised as Europeans, when they visit Hindoostaun, and first see the Tazia conveyed about in procession, which would be counted sacrilegious in Persia or Arabia; but here, the ceremony is not complete without a mixture of pageantry with, the deeply expressed and public exposure of their grief.[43]

The remarkable plainness of the mosque, contrasted with the superb decorations of an Emaum-baarah, excited my surprise. I am told by the most venerable of Syaads, 'The Mosque is devoted only to the service of God, where it is commanded no worldly attractions or ornaments shall appear, to draw off the mind, or divert the attention, from that one great object for which the house of prayer is intended'. An Emaum-baarah is erected for the purpose of doing honour to the memory of the Emaums, and of late years the emulative spirit of individuals has been the great inducement to the display of ornamental decorations.

It is rather from their respect to the Founder of their religion and his descendants, than any part of their profession of faith, that the Mussulmaun population of Hindoostaun are guided by in these displays, which are merely the fashion of other people whom they imitate; and with far different motives to the weak-minded Hindoos, who exalt their idols, whilst the former thus testify their respect to worthy mortals only. This is the explanation I have received from devout Mussulmauns, who direct me to remark the strong similarity—in habit only, where 'the faith' is not liable to innovations—between themselves and the Hindoo population;—the out-of-door celebrations of marriage festivals, for instance, which are so nearly resembling each other, in the same classes of society, that scarcely any difference can be discovered by the common observer.

Idolatry is hateful to a Mussulmaun, who acknowledges 'one only true God', and 'Him alone to be worshipped'.[44] They respect, venerate, love, and would imitate, their acknowledged Prophet and the Emaums (who succeeded Mahumud in the mission), but

they never worship them, as has been often imagined. On the contrary, they declare to me that their faith compels them 'to believe in one God, and that He alone is to be worshipped by the creature; and that Mahumud is a creature, the Prophet sent by God to make His will known, and declare His power. That to bow down and worship Mahumud would be gross idolatry; and, although he is often mentioned in their prayers, yet he is never prayed to. They believe their Prophet is sensible of whatever passes amongst his true disciples; and that, in proportion as they fulfil the commands he was instructed by God to leave with them, so will they derive benefit from his intercession, on that great and awful day, when all mankind shall appear before the judgment seat of God.'

[1] *Imambara*, 'enclosure of the Imam', the place where the Muharram rites are performed, as contrasted with Masjid, a mosque, and 'Idgah, where the service at the 'Id festivals is conducted.

[2] *Ta'ziya*, 'consoling'. The use of these miniature tombs is said to date from the time of Amir Taimur (A.D. 1336-1405), who on his return from Karbala made a model of Husain's tomb. See a good account of them in Sir G. Birdwood, *Sva*, 173 ff.

[3] *Abrak*, tale.

[4] From Karbala, the place of pilgrimage.

[5] *Mardanah*.

[6] *Maqbarah*, 'place of graves'.

[7] *Shatranj[-i]*, a chequered cloth, from *shatrang*, the game of chess.

[8] *Majlis*.

[9] *Mulaqat*.

[10] *Mimbar*, sometimes a wooden structure, sometimes of masonry.

[11] Green is the Sayyid colour (E.W. Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 38). But it is an innovation in Islam, and Sayyids in Al-Hijaz, as a general rule, do not wear a green turban (Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 4).

[12] The spread hand designates the Sheah sect. There are times when holding up the spread hand declares the Sheah, whilst the Soonie is distinguished by his holding up three fingers only. In villages, the spread hand is marked on the walls where Sheahs reside during Mahurrum. [*Author*.]

> [The five spread fingers are regarded as emblematical of the Prophet, Fâtimah, 'Ali, Hasan, and Husain. The Sunnis prefer three fingers, signifying

the first three Caliphs. In its ultimate origin, the spread hand is a charm against demons and evil spirits.]

[13] *Maulavi*, a Muhammadan doctor of law, a judge.

[14] From Dhie, ten; Mudgelluss, assembling together for sacred purposes. [*Author*.] or [*Dah*, or *Dahha majlis* denotes the ten days of Muharram; see Sir L. Pelly, *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain*, i. 74.]

[15] Corrupted by Anglo-Indians into *Hobson-Jobson*, the title of Sir H. Yule's *Anglo-Indian Glossary*.

[16] *Matam*, 'mourning'.

[17] *Pan*, 'betel leaf'.

[18] Cardamom.

[19] *Dhaniya* (*Coriandrum sativitm*).

[20] *Huqqah*, 'a water tobacco pipe'.

[21] *Marsiyah*, 'a funeral elegy'.

[22] *Palang*, a more pretentious piece of furniture than the *charpai*, or common 'cot'.

[23] *Masnad*, 'a thing leaned on', a pile of cushions; the throne of a sovereign.

[24] *Khichar*.

[25] *Khichri*, the 'Kedgeree' of Anglo-Indians.

[26] *Gota*.

[27] Catechu, Hindi *Kath*.

[28] *Batua*.

[29] *Jamdani*, properly a portmanteau for holding clothes (*Jama*): a kind of flowered cloth.

[30] *Nath*.

[31] *Joshan*, an ornament worn on the upper arm.

[32] *Pa[~e]jama*, 'leg clothing', drawers.

[33] *Dopatta*, a sheet made of two breadths of cloth.

[34] Amongst the Muhammadans the proportion of widows has declined steadily since 1881, and is now only 143 per mille compared with 170 in that year. It would seem that the prejudices against widow-marriages are gradually becoming weaker.—*Report Census of India*, 1911, i. 273.

[35] [~A]y[~a], from Portuguese *aia*, 'a nurse'.

[36] After much, entreaty, this humble zealot was induced to take a sweet lime, occasionally, to cool her poor parched mouth. She survived the trial, and lived many years to repeat her practised abstinence at the return of Mahurrum. [*Author*.]

[37] *Butkhanah*.

[38] This was a primitive Semitic taboo (Exodus iii. 5; Joshua v. 15, &c.). The reason of this prohibition is that shoes could not be easily washed.—W.R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*[2], 453.

[39] Mordaunt Ricketts was Resident at Lucknow between 1821 and 1830, when he was 'superannuated' owing to financial scandals, for the details of which see Sir G. Trevelyan, *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, cap. x; H.G. Keene, *Here and There*, 10; on November 1, 1824, he was married at Lucknow by Bishop Heber to the widow of George Ravenscroft, the civilian who was Collector of Cawnpore, and there embezzled large sums of money, the property of Government. He fled with his wife and child to Bhinga in Oudh, where, on May 6, 1823, he was murdered by Dacoits. The strange story is well told by Sleeman, *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh*, i. 112 ff.

[40] Persian *ustad, ustadji*, 'an instructor'.

[41] Lamentation for the dead was strictly prohibited by the Prophet; but, like all orientals, the Indian Musalmans indulge in it. (*Mishkat*, i, chap, vii.)

[42] *Mulla*, the Persian form of Maulavi, 'a doctor of law'.

[43] It is a mistake to suppose that the procession of the Ta'ziya or Tabut is peculiar to India. It is practised in Persia and Egypt.

[44] The Prophet was obliged to make some compromise with idolatry, as in the case of the Black Stone at Mecca. But he protested against idols in one of the earliest Suurahs of the Koraan (lii 35-43), and in other passages.

LETTER III

Continuation of Mahurrum.—Consecration of Banners.—Durgah at Lucknow.—Its origin explained.—Regarded with peculiar veneration.—The Nuwaub vows to build a new one.—Its description.—Procession to the Durgah.—Najoomies.—Influence possessed and practised by them.—Eunuchs.—Anecdotes of some having attained great honours and wealth.—Presents bestowed upon them generally revert to the donor.—Rich attire of male and female slaves.

After the Tazia is brought home (as the temporary ones are from the bazaar on the eve of Mahurrum, attended by a ceremonious display of persons, music, flags, flambeaux, &c.), there is little to remark of out-door parade beyond the continual activity of the multitude making the sacred visits to their several Emaum-baarahs, until the fifth day, when the banners are conveyed from each of them in solemn procession, to be consecrated at the Durgah[1] (literally translated, 'The threshold' or 'Entrance to a sanctified place').

This custom is perhaps exclusively observed by the inhabitants of Lucknow, where I have had the privilege of acquiring a knowledge of the motives which guide most of their proceedings; and as there is a story attached to the Durgah, not generally known to European visitors, I propose relating it here, as it particularly tends to explain the reasons for the Mussulmauns conveying their banners for consecration to that celebrated shrine.

'A native of India—I forget his name—remarkable for his devotion and holy life, undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca; whilst engaged in these duties at the "holy house", he was visited with a prophetic dream. Abass Ali (the standard-bearer and relation of Hosein) appeared to him in his dream, commanding him, that as soon as his duties at Mecca were fulfilled he should, without delay, proceed to Kraabaallah, to the tomb of Hosein; directing him, with great precision, how he was to find the exact spot of earth where was deposited the very Allum[2] (banner) of Hosein, which he (Abass Ali) had, on the great day of Kraabaallah, carried to the field. The man was further instructed to possess himself of this relic secretly, and convey it about his person until he should reach his native country, when he would be more fully directed by the orderings of Providence how the relic should be disposed of.

'The Hadjee followed all the injunctions he had received punctually; the exact spot was easily discovered, by the impressions from his dream; and, fearing the jealousy of the Arabs, he used the utmost precaution, working by night, to secure to himself the possession of so inestimable a prize, without exciting their suspicion, or attracting the notice of the numerous pilgrims who thronged the shrine by day. After several nights of severe labour he discovered, to his great joy, the metal crest of the banner; and concluding the banner and staff to have mouldered away, from their having been so long entombed in the earth, he cautiously secreted the crest about his person, and after enduring the many vicissitudes and privations, attendant on the long journey from Arabia to India, he finally succeeded in reaching Lucknow in safety with his prize.

'The Nuwaub Asof ood Duolah[3] ruled at this period in Oude; the pilgrim made his adventures known to him, narrating his dream, and the circumstances which led to his gaining possession of the crest. The Nuwaub gave full credence to his story, and became the holder of the relic himself, rewarding the Hadjee handsomely for his trouble, and gave immediate orders for a small building to be erected under the denomination of "Huzerut Abass Ali Ke Durgah",[4] in which the crest was safely deposited with due honours, and the fortunate pilgrim was appointed guardian with a liberal salary.

'In the course of time, this Durgah grew into great repute amongst the general classes of the Mussulmaun population, who, venerating their Emaum Hosein, had more than common respect for this trifle, which they believed had been used in his personal service. Here the public were permitted to offer their sacrifices and oblations to God, on occasions of importance to themselves; as after the performance of the rite of circumcision in particular, grand processions were formed conveying the youthful Mussulmaun, richly attired, attended by music, &c. and offering presents of money and sweetmeats at the shrine which contains their Emaum's sacred relic. On these occasions the beggars of every denomination were benefited by the liberality of the grateful father, and the offerings at the shrine became the property of the guardian of the Durgah, who, it was expected, would deal out from his receipts to the necessitous as occasions served.'

This custom is still observed, with equal veneration for the shrine and its deposit; and when a lady recovers from the perils attendant on giving to her husband's house a desired heir, she is conveyed, with all the pomp and parade due to her rank in life, to this Durgah, attended by her female relatives, friends, domestics, eunuchs, and slaves, in covered conveyances; in her train are gentlemen on horseback, in palkies, or on elephants, to do honour to the joyful event; the Guardian's wife having charge on these occasions of the ladies' visits; and the Guardian, with the gentlemen and all the males, guarding the sanctuary outside; for they are not permitted to enter whilst it is occupied by the ladies, the eunuchs alone having that privilege where females congregate.

Recovery from sickness, preservation from any grievous calamity, danger, or other event which excites grateful feelings, are the usual inducements to visiting the Durgah, with both males and females, amongst the Mussulmaun population of Lucknow. These recurrences yield ample stores of cash, clothes, &c. left at the disposal of the Guardian, who, if a good man, disperses these charitable donations amongst the indigent with a liberality equal to that of the donors in their various offerings.

The Durgah had grown into general respect, when a certain reigning Nuwaub was afflicted by a severe and tedious illness, which baffled the skill of his physicians, and resisted the power of the medicine resorted to for his recovery. A confidential Najoom[5] (astrologer), in the service of his Highness, of great repute in his profession, advised his master to make a vow, that 'If in the wisdom of Divine Providence his health should be restored, he would build a new Durgah on the site of the old one, to be dedicated to Abass Ali, and to be the shrine for the sacred deposit of the crest of Hosein'. The Nuwaub, it appears, recovered rapidly after the vow had been made, and he went in great pomp and state to return thanks to God in this Durgah, surrounded by the nobles and officers of his

Court, and the whole strength of his establishment accompanied him on the occasion. So grand was the spectacle, that the old people of the city talk of it at this day as a scene never equalled in the annals of Lucknow, for splendour and magnificence; immense sums of money were distributed on the road to the populace, and at the Durgah; the multitude, of all classes, hailing his emancipation from the couch of sickness with deafening cheers of vociferous exultation.

In fulfilment of his vow, the Nuwaub gave immediate orders for erecting the magnificent edifice, which now graces the suburbs of Lucknow, about five miles from that part of the city usually occupied by the Sovereign Ruler of the province of Oude. By virtue of the Nuwaub's vow and recovery, the before-respected Durgah has, thus newly built, increased in favour with the public; and, on account of the veneration they have for all that concerns their Emaums, the banners which adorn the Tazias of Hosein must be consecrated by being brought to this sacred edifice; where, by the condescending permission of the Sovereign, both the rich and the poor are with equal favour admitted, at that interesting period of Mahurrum, to view the crest of their Leader, and present their own banners to be touched and thus hallowed by the, to them, sacred relic. The crest is fixed to a staff, but no banner attached to it; this is placed within a high railing, supported by a platform, in the centre of the building; on either side splendid banners are exhibited on these occasions.

The Durgah is a square building, entered by flights of steps from the court-yard; the banner of each person is conveyed through the right entrance, opposite the platform, where it is immediately presented to touch the revered crest; this is only the work of a few seconds; that party walks on, and moves out to the left again into the court-yard; the next follows in rapid succession, and so on till all have performed this duty: by this arrangement, confusion is obviated; and, in the course of the day, perhaps forty or fifty thousand banners[6] may have touched the Emaum's consecrated crest. On these occasions, the vast population of Lucknow may be imagined by the almost countless multitude, of every rank, who visit this Durgah: there is no tax levied on the people, but the sums collected must be immense, since every one conscientiously offers something, according to his inclination or his means, out of pure respect to the memory of Hosein.

The order of procession, appointed by each noble proprietor of banners, to be consecrated at the Durgah, forms a grand spectacle. There is no material difference in their countless numbers; the most wealthy and the meanest subjects of the province make displays commensurate with their ability, whilst those persons who make the most costly exhibitions enjoy the greatest share of popular favour, as it is considered a proof of their desire to do honour to the memory of Hosein and Hasan, their venerated Emaums.

A description of one, just passing my house, will give you a general idea of these processions,—it belongs to a rich man of the city:—A guard of soldiers surrounds four elephants on which several men are seated, on pads or cushions, supporting the banners; the staffs of several are of silver,—the spread hand, and other crests, are formed of the same metal, set with precious stones. Each banner—they all resemble—is in the shape of a long scarf of rich silk, of bright florid colours, embroidered very deep at the ends,

which are finished with gold and silver bullion fringes; it is caught together near the middle, and tied with rich gold and silver cords and tassels to the top of the staff, just under the hand or crest. The silks, I observe, are of many different colours, forming an agreeable variety, some blue, purple, green, yellow, &c. Red is not used; being the Soonies' distinguishing colour at Mahurrum it is carefully avoided by the zealous Sheahs—the Soonies are violently opposed to the celebration of this festival. After the elephants, a band of music follows, composed of every variety of Native instruments, with drums and fifes; the trumpets strike me as the greatest novelty in their band; some of them are very long and powerful in their effect.

Next in the order of procession I observe a man in deep mourning, supporting a black pole, on which two swords are suspended from a bow reversed—the swords unsheathed glittering in the sun. The person who owns the banners, or his deputy, follows next on foot, attended by readers of the Musseeah, and a large party of friends in mourning. The readers select such passages as are particularly applicable to the part Abass Ali took in the affair at Kraabaallah, which is chanted at intervals, the procession pausing for that purpose.

Then comes Dhull Dhull,[7]—the name of Hosein's horse at Kraabaallah;—that selected for the present purpose is a handsome white Arab, caparisoned according to the olden style of Arabia: due care is taken to represent the probable sufferings of both animal and rider, by the bloody horsecloth—the red-stained legs—and the arrows apparently sticking in several parts of his body; on the saddle is fixed a turban in the Arabian style, with the bow and arrows;—the bridle, &c. are of very rich embroidery; the stirrups and mountings of solid silver. The horse and all its attire are given after Mahurrum, in charity, to a poor Syaad. Footmen, with the afthaadah[8] and chowrie[9]—peculiar emblems of royalty in India—attend Dhull Dhull. The friends of the family walk near the horse; then servants of all classes, to fill up the parade, and many foot-soldiers, who occasionally fire singly, giving to the whole description a military effect.

I have seen many other processions on these fifth days of Mahurrum—they all partake of one style,—some more splendid than others; and the very poor people parade their banners, with, perhaps, no other accompaniment than a single drum and fife, and the owner supporting his own banner.

My next letter will contain the procession of Mayndhie, which forms a grand feature of Mahurrum display on the seventh night.

P.S.—The Najoomee are men generally with some learning, who, for their supposed skill in astrology, have, in all ages since Mahumud's death, been more or less courted and venerated by the Mussulmaun people;—I should say, with those who have not the fear of God stronger in their hearts than the love of the world and its vanities;—the really religious people discountenance the whole system and pretended art of the astrologer.

It is wonderful the influence a Najoom acquires in the houses of many great men in India;—wherever one of these idlers is entertained he is the oracle to be consulted on all

occasions, whether the required solution be of the utmost importance, or the merest trifling subject. I know those who submit, with a childlike docility, to the Najoom's opinion, when their better reason, if allowed to sway, would decide against the astrologer's prediction. If Najoom says it is not proper for Nuwaub Sahib, or his Begum, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to take medicine, to go from home, to give away or accept a gift, or any other action which human reason is the best guide to decide upon, Najoom has said it,—and Najoom must be right. Najoom can make peace or war, in the family he overrules, at his pleasure; and many are the houses divided against themselves by the wicked influence of a bad man, thus exercising his crafty wiles over the weakness of his credulous master.—So much for Najoomee; and now for my second notice of the Eunuchs:—[10]

They are in great request among the highest order of people, and from their long sojourn in a family, this class of beings are generally faithfully attached to the interest and welfare of their employer; they are much in the confidence of their master and mistress, and very seldom betray their trust. Being frequently purchased, whilst children, from the base wretches who have stolen them in infancy from the parental roof, they often grow up to a good old age with the family by whom they are adopted; they enjoy many privileges denied to other classes of slaves;—are admitted at all hours and seasons to the zeenahnahs; and often, by the liberality of their patrons, become rich and honourable;—still 'he is but a slave', and when he dies, his property reverts to his owner.

In Oude there have been many instances of Eunuchs arriving to great honour, distinctions, and vast possessions. Al Mauss Ali Khaun[11] was of the number, within the recollection of many who survive him; he was the favoured Eunuch of the House of Oude; a person of great attainments, and gifted with a remarkably superior mind, he was appointed Collector over an immense tract of country, by the then reigning Nuwaub, whose councils he benefited by his great judgment. He lived to a good old age, in the unlimited confidence of his prince, and enjoyed the good will and affection of all who could appreciate what is valuable in honest integrity. He died as he had lived, in the most perfect resignation to whatever was the will of God, in whose mercy he trusted through time, and for eternity. Many of the old inhabitants speak of him with veneration and respect, declaring he was the perfect pattern for good Mussulmauns to imitate.

Another remarkable Eunuch, Affrine Khaun,[12] of the Court of Oude, is well remembered in the present generation also,—the poor having lost a kind benefactor, and the rich a sensible companion, by his death. His vast property he had willed to others than the sovereign ruler of Oude (whose property he actually was), who sent, as is usual in these cases, to take possession of his estate, immediately after his death; the gates were barred, and the heirs the Eunuch had chosen to his immense wealth had taken possession; which I am not aware was disputed afterwards by the reigning Nuwaub, although by right of the Mussulmaun law, the Nuwaub owned both the slave and the slave's wealth.

This accounts, perhaps, for the common practice in the higher circles of the Mussulmaun population, of heaping ornaments and riches on favourite slaves; the wealth thus expended at one time, is but a loan in the hands of safe keepers, to revert again to the

original proprietor whenever required by the master, or no longer of service to the slave, who has neither power to bestow, nor heirs to benefit from the property he may leave when he dies.

I have frequently observed, among the most exalted ladies, that their female slaves are very often superbly dressed; and, on occasions of marriage ceremonies, or other scenes of festivity, they seem proud of taking them in their suite, handsomely dressed, and richly adorned with the precious metals, in armlets, bangles, chains, &c.; the lady thus adding to her own consequence by the display of her attendant slaves. The same may be observed with regard to gentlemen, who have men-slaves attending them, and who are very frequently attired in costly dresses, expensive shawls, and gold ornaments.

[1] *Dargah*, '(sacred) door-place'.

[2] '*Alam*. For illustrations of those banners see Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 408 ff.; Mrs. Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, ii. 18.

[3] Asaf-ud-daula, eldest son of Nawab Shuja'-ud-daula, on whose death in 1775 he succeeded. He changed the seat of government from Faizabad to Lucknow, where he died in 1797, and was buried in the Imambara. He is principally remembered for his liberality. The merchants, on opening their shops, used to sing:

> *Jisko na de Maula,*
> *Tisko de Asaf-ud-daula*.
> Who from Heaven nought receiveth,
> To him Asaf-ud-daula giveth.

[4] Mr. H.C. Irwin informs me that the Dargah is situated on the Crommelin Road, rather more than a mile south-west of the Machhi Bhawan fort. It was here that Nawab Sa'adat 'Al'i, on his accession, vowed that he would reform his ways—an intention which was not realized.

[5] *Nujumi*, 'an astrologer'; '*ilm-i-nujum*, 'astrology, astronomy'.

[6] The numbers are greatly exaggerated.

[7] Duldul was the name of the Prophet's mule which he gave to 'Ali. It is often confounded with Buraq, the Assyrian-looking gryphon on which he alleged that he flew to Mecca.

[8] *Aftabgir*, 'a sun-screen'; see p. 47.

[9] *Chaunri*, the bushy tail of the yak, used as a fly-flapper.

[10] Writing in 1849, General Sleeman remarks that Dom singers and eunuchs are the virtual rulers of Oudh.—*A Journey through Oudh*, i, introd. lxi, 178.

[11] Almas ['the diamond'] 'Ali Khan, known as Miyan ['Master'] Almas, according to General Sleeman, was 'the greatest and best man of any note that Oude has produced. He held for about forty years Miyanganj and other districts, yielding to the Oude Government an annual revenue of more than eighty lacs of rupees [about £850,000]. During this time he kept the people secure in life and property, and as happy as people in such a state of society can be; and the whole country under his charge was during his lifetime a garden. He lived here in great magnificence, and was often visited by his sovereign.' (Ibid., i. 320 f.). Lord Valentia more than once speaks highly of him (*Travels*, i. 136, 241). He also notes that the Nawab was anxiously watching for his death, because, being a slave, under Muhammadan law his estates reverted to the Crown.—See N.B.E. Baillie, *Digest of Moohummudan Law* (1875), 367 f.

[12] Afrin Khan, 'lord of praise', Mr. Irwin informs me, is mentioned in the *Tarikh Farahbakhsh* (tr. W. Hoey, 129) as engaged in negotiations when Nawab Asaf-ud-daula, at the instigation of Warren Hastings and Haidar Beg, was attempting to extort money from the Nawab Begam.

LETTER IV

Mahurrum concluded.—Night of Mayndhie.—Emaum-baarah of the King of Oude.—Procession to Shaah Nudghiff.—Last day of Mahurrum.—Chattahs. —Musical instruments.—Zeal of the Native gentlemen.—Funeral obsequies over the Tazia at Kraabaallah.—Sentiments of devout Mussulmauns.—The fast followed by acts of charity.—Remarks on the observance of Mahurrum.

The public display on the seventh Mahurrum is by torch-light, and called the night of Mayndhie,[1] intending to represent the marriage ceremony for Cossum, who, it will be remembered, in the sketch of the events of Kraabaallah, was married to his cousin Sakeena Koobraah, the favourite daughter of Hosein, on the morning of the celebrated battle.

This night presents to the public all the outward and showy parade which marks the Mayndhie procession of a real wedding ceremony, of which I propose speaking further in another place. This display at Mahurrum is attended with considerable expense; consequently, the very rich only observe the out-door formalities to be exhibited on this occasion; yet all classes, according to their means, remember the event, and celebrate it at home.

The Mayndhie procession of one great personage, in Native cities, is directed—by previous arrangement—to the Emaum-baarah of a superior. I was present, on one

occasion, when the Mayndhie of the Prime Minister of Oude was sent to the King's Emaum-baarah, called Shaah Nudghiff,[2]—from the mausoleum of Ali, of which it is an exact representation, on a small scale.

It is situated near the banks of the river Goomtie,[3] some distance from the palace at Lucknow; the entrance to the outer court, or quadrangle, is by a handsome gateway of brickwork plastered and polished, resembling marble. On each side of the gateway, and carried up the two sides, in a line with the building, are distinct apartments, designed for the abode of the distressed and houseless poor; the back of these apartments forms a substantial wall or enclosure. The Shaah Nudghiff faces the gateway, and appears to be a square building, on a broad base of flights of steps, with a cupola roof; the interior is paved with black and white marble tesselated, the walls and dome neatly ornamented with plaster and gold in relief, the beading, cornices, &c. of gold, to correspond on a stone-colour ground. The cupola and cornices on the outside are richly ornamented with plaster designs, relieved with gold; on the summit of the dome is placed a crown, of pure silver, gilt, of an immense size.

The decorations of the interior, for the season of Mahurrum, were on a scale of grandeur not easily to be conveyed by description. The walls were well covered with handsome glasses and mirrors; the splendid chandeliers,—one containing a hundred wax lights,—in every variety, and relieved with coloured lamps—amber, blue, and green,—mellowing the light, and giving a fairy-like effect to the brilliant scene. In the centre of the building stood the green glass Tazia, surrounded by wax lights; on the right of which was placed an immense lion, and on the left, a fish,[4] both formed of the same bright emerald-green glass as the Tazia. The richness and elegance of the banners,—which were numerous and well arranged,—could be equalled only by the costliness of their several mountings.

In Asiatic buildings niches and recesses prevail in all convenient situations, and here they are appropriated for the reception of the relics of antiquity and curiosities; such as models of Mecca, the tent of Hosein, the gate of Kraabaallah, &c.; these three are made of pure silver, and rest on tables of the same metal. Many curious sabres, of all ages, shields, chain armour of the ancients, lances, &c., arranged with much taste, adorn the interior.

The pulpit (mhembur) is of silver, and of very handsome workmanship; the whole of the fitting up and arrangements had been made under the eye of his Majesty, and to his good taste may be ascribed all the merit of the well-ordered display for these occasions. He delighted in visiting this place, which he not only designed as a tribute of his respect to the Emaums, but as the future repository for his own remains, when this world should cease to be his place of joy, or anxious care. His intention has been fulfilled—he died in 1827, aged fifty years, much and justly beloved and regretted by all who knew him; his funeral obsequies were impressively grand, according to Mussulmaun custom. This good and amiable King was succeeded by his only son Nusseer ood deen Hyder,[5] who had just completed his twenty-second year when he began to reign.

On the evening of Mayndhie, the crowds of admiring people were admitted to view their Paidshah's (King's) exhibition; until the distant sounds of musketry announced the

approach of the spectacle, when the multitude were desired to quit the Emaum-baarah. Hundreds still lingering, could not be prevailed on to depart, except by the stripes dealt out unsparingly from the whips of the hurkaarahs[6] and peons, appointed to keep order on the occasion. The place cleared, and quiet restored, I had leisure to view the fairy-like palace of splendour, before the bustle of the procession reached the building. I could hardly persuade myself the picture before me was not a dream, instead of a reality.

I stood at the entrance to watch the approach of the minister's train, through the gateway into the illuminated quadrangle. Spacious as this court-yard is, it was nearly filled with the many people forming the Mayndhie parade. I should imagine there could not be less than three thousand souls engaged in this service, including the match-lock soldiery. Several trays of Mayndhie are brought, with the other requisites for the usual forms of marriage gifts, such as sweetmeats, dried fruits, garlands of sweet jasmine, imitative beds of flowers, composed of uberuck: in some of the flowers, fireworks were concealed, to be let off in the quadrangle. An imitative tomb on a bier is also paraded, together with the palkie and chundole of silver, which are the covered conveyances for females of the royal family, or such of the nobility as are privileged by grants from the crown; all other females use the covered palkie, mahanah, dhollee, and the rutt.[7] Several bands of music follow, and torches out of number. The elephants, camels, cavalry, &c., are left in the open space, outside the gateway—the gentlemen, dismounting, enter with Dhull Dhull and the trays of Mayndhie.

I trembled for the probable destruction of the brilliant ornaments in the Emaum-baarah, when I heard the noble animal was to make the circuit round the Tazia. Dhull Dhull, being led in, went up the steps with little difficulty; and to my astonishment, the gentle creature paced the tesselated floor, in very slow time, without once slipping, or seeming concerned at the novelty of his situation; indeed, this docile animal seemed to me the only living thing present that felt no interest in the scene—rendered more attractive and conspicuous by the gentle manners of the pretty Dhull Dhull himself. The circuit being made, he was conducted back into the court-yard, without the slightest accident or confusion occurring during his visit to the Emaum-baarah.

The model of the tomb of Cossum, the chundole and palkie, the trays of Mayndhie, sweetmeats, &c. were deposited here until the tenth day, when they accompany the King's temporary Tazia cavalcade to Kraabaallah for interment.

The ceremonies performed on this night of Mayndhie resemble, in every particular, those of the same rank of persons on the actual solemnization of a wedding, even to the distribution of money amongst the populace who crowd in multitudes on such occasions, though apparently more eager for the prize than the sight.

The most imposing spectacle in the celebration of Mahurrum, is reserved for the last day;[8] and, judging from the activity of all classes, the zealous exertions of the multitude, the deep interest marked on every face, male and female, a mere spectator might well imagine this morning to be of more importance than any other in the Mussulmaun's catalogue of days.

At the earliest hour of the dawning day, the preparations for the march being complete,—which had occupied the hours usually devoted to sleep,—the streets and roads present a very animated picture. From the bustle and outpouring of the multitude, on this one absorbing engagement, a stranger might be led back in imagination to the flight from Egypt; the object, however, is very different from that of the children of Israel. The order of the day being to commemorate the death of Hosein, a grand military funeral is pourtrayed in each person's cavalcade, all pressing forward to their chosen Kraabaallah,—the poor man, with his humble Tazia and flags, falling in the rear of the more affluent person's display, as well for protection as for speed. There is so much of similarity in these processions, that the description of one will be sufficient to convey the idea of the whole, as they pass on in succession to the chosen place of burial.[9]

The consecrated banners take the precedence, in the order of march, carried by men on elephants; then a band of music. Next comes the jillewdhar[10] (sword-bearer), supporting, on a black staff, the bow reversed, with brilliant swords suspended; on each side of him are men bearing black poles, on which are fixed immense long streamers of black unspun silk,—designed to symbolize grief, despair, &c.

Then follows the horse, caparisoned as on the day of consecrating the banners; it is attended by servants, in the same order as when a prince rides out,—viz. a man with the afthaadah[11] (or sun),—the well-dressed grooms, holding the bridle rein on either side,—a man with the chowrie of peacock's feathers in a silver handle,—chobdhaahs[12] with long silver and gold staffs,—sota badhaahs,[13] with short staffs resembling fish, of the same materials,—hurkaarahs (running-footmen, or messengers), bearing small triangular banners with silver handles,—shoe-bearers, &c.

The royal chattah[14] (umbrella), of embroidered velvet, is supported over the head of Dhull Dhull. This article in its plain garb, so generally used in Europe, is, in Hindoostaun, an original distinguishing mark of royalty, gracing the King's throne in lieu of a canopy. In Oude, the chattah cannot be used by the subject when in view of the sovereign; if the King's dunkah[15] be heard abroad, the people hide their chattahs, and even descend from their carriages, elephants, horses, or palkies, standing with their hands folded, in all humility, to make obeisance to the King,—resuming them only when the royal cortège has moved out of sight. I have known many of the first nobility in the Court of Oude, and English gentlemen in the King's suite, exposed to the rays of the morning sun, during the hottest season of the year; in these airings, the King alone has the benefit of a chattah, except the Resident happens to be of the party, who being always received as an equal, is privileged to the chattah, the chowrie, and the hookha; indulgences of which those only who have lived in India can possibly estimate the true value.

But to my subject:—The saddle is adorned with Hosein's chain armour, gold turban, a richly set sword, with an embroidered belt: some of the family and friends attend respectfully near the horse. Then follow the bearers of incense, in gold censers, suspended to chains, which they wave about, fumigating the air with the refreshing smell of lahbaun,[16]—a sweet-scented resin from the cedar of Lebanon, I imagine, though some suppose it to be the frankincense noticed in Scripture.

Next in the cavalcade is a chanter or reader of the Musseeah, who selects passages from that well-arranged work suited to the time when Hosein's person was the mark for Yuzeed's arrows, and which describe his conduct on the trying occasion; one or two couplets being chanted, the procession advances in slow time, halting every five minutes on the way from the beginning to the end of the march. The reader is attended by the proprietor of the Tazia display, and his many relatives and friends, bare-footed, and without any covering on their heads;—many of these persons throw chaff on their heads,[17] expressive of grief, and whilst the Musseeah is chanted, their boisterous expressions of sorrow are painfully severe to the mere observer of the scene.

The Tazia then follows, surrounded by banners, and covered with a canopy upheld by silver poles in the hands of the supporters, according to the general style of conveying their dead at the funerals of the Mussulmauns. The canopy is of green, bordered and embroidered with gold. The model of Cossum's tomb follows in succession, which is covered with gold cloth, and has a canopy also supported over it, in the same way, by poles carried by several men. The palkie and chundole of silver and tissue are next seen; the trays of Mayndhie, the flowers of uberuck, and the other paraphernalia of the marriage ceremony, follow in due order. Then the camels and elephants, conveying the tent equipage and luggage of Hosein, form a long train, representing the supposed style of his march from Medina to Kraabaallah.

The last and most judicious feature in the arrangement is the several elephants with confidential servants, distributing bread and money to the poor, who are thus attracted to the rear in countless numbers, leaving the cavalcade in quiet possession of the space of roadway uncrowded by the multitude. The bread given on these occasions is in great esteem amongst the females, who receive a small portion from the followers on their return from Kraabaallah with veneration, for the Emaum's sake, in whose name it is given. I have often been led to the remembrance of past times by this act of theirs, when the cross-buns of Good-Friday were esteemed by the aged women as possessing virtues beyond the mere substance of the cake.

The whole line of march is guarded in each procession by burkhandhars[18] (matchlock men), who fire singly, at intervals on the way. Several bands of music are dispersed in the cavalcade, performing solemn dirge-like airs, peculiar to the style of composition in Hindoostaun and well-suited to the occasion—muffled drums and shrill trumpets, imitating the reiteration of 'Hasan, Hosein', when Mortem is performed. I remember a fine female elephant, belonging to King Ghauzee ood deen Hyder, which had been so well instructed, as to keep time with the soundings from her proboscis with the occasional Mortems. I cannot say that she clearly pronounced the names of the two sons of Ali, yet the regularity of keeping time with the music and the human voices was of itself sufficient to excite admiration—the Natives declare that she pronounces the names distinctly. Her name is Hoseinie, the feminine of Hosein.

Amongst the many varieties of Native musical instruments I have seen in India, the kettle-drum is the most simple and singular, which I will take the liberty of describing:—It is of well-baked earth, moulded in the usual way, and very similar in shape to those of

the Royal Horse Guards. A globe of the common size, divided into exact halves, would be about the dimension and shape of a pair of Indian manufacture; the parchment is strained over the open mouth, with a thin hoop to fix it firm; the slightest pressure with the fingers on this hoop draws it into tune. The simplicity of this accompaniment to the human voice, when touched by the fingers, very much in the way Europeans use the tambourine, is only to be appreciated by those who have been long acquainted with the sound. The only time when it is beaten with sticks is, when used as dunkahs, before the King and Queen, on their appearing in public—a sort of alarum to warn obstructing hackeries, or carriages, to move out of the way.

I have occasionally observed a singular mode of imitating the sound of cavalry going over hard ground, adopted in the processions of great men on the tenth of Mahurrum; the contrivance is called chuckee,[19] and composed of ebony, or some equally hard wood, the shape and size of a pocket globe, divided into halves; each person, having the pair, beats them with a particular tact on the flat surface, so as to produce the desired sound of horses galloping; and where from fifty to a hundred men, or more, are engaged in this performance, the resemblance may be easily conceived.

There are many little observances, not of sufficient importance to make them general to all who keep Mahurrum, that need not here be detailed;—but one must not be omitted, as it is a feature in the domestic observances of Mussulmauns. On the Tazias, when about to be conveyed to Kraabaallah, I discovered small portions of corn, rice, bread, fruits, flowers, cups of water, &c.;—this is in keeping with the Mussulmaun funerals, who invariably convey food to the tomb with their dead.[1] For the same reason, at Mahurrum, camphor and rosewater are always carried with the Tazia to Kraabaallah, although there is not the same occasion for the articles, as will be observed when the burial service is explained.

I have seen females of rank, with their own hands, place red and green wax lights in front of the Tazia in their halls, on the night of Mayndhie. I was told, in answer to my inquiry, What was meant by the solemn process I had witnessed?—that these ladies had some petition to make, for which they sought the Emaum's intercession at the throne of mercy. The red light was for Hosein, who died in battle; the green for Hasan, who died by poison,—which these colours symbolize; and that those females place great dependance on the fulfilment of their desires, who thus present to their Emaums the wax lights on the night of Mayndhie.

I have remarked that the noblemen and gentlemen generally engaged in the service of celebrating Mahurrum, walk on the tenth morning with their heads bare and their feet uncovered from their homes to the burial ground[2] called Kraabaallah, whatever may be the distance,—perhaps four or five miles,—exposed to the fiery rays of the sun: some persons, who on this occasion are very scrupulous in thus humbling their nature, walk back again in the same manner, after the funeral ceremony has been duly gone through at Kraabaallah. The magnitude of this undertaking can be only well understood by those who have experienced the state of an atmosphere in the shady rooms of a large house, when the thermometer ranges from eighty-four to eighty-eight, or even ninety degrees;

and when, if you venture to the verandah for a few seconds, the flames of heated wind are not only insupportable to Europeans, but frequently produce severe attacks of fever. The luxurious habits of the Eastern great men may be well recollected when counting over the proofs of zeal exhibited in this undertaking, where every selfish consideration for the time is banished. The nobility (or indeed any one who lays the slightest claim to gentility) never walk from one house to another during their lives, but at this particular season; even in their gardens indulging in whatever luxury they may boast, by being conveyed round in their palkie, or thonjaun[22]—a chair with poles, supported by bearers. On the tenth day, the good Mussulmauns rigidly fast until after the third watch; not even a drop of water, or the hookha, enters their mouths;—as they believe Hosein's sufferings only concluded just before the third watch, they cautiously abstain from indulgences, until that hour has passed.

The procession having reached Kraabaallah, the whole ceremony of a funeral is gone through. The Tazia is committed to the grave with equal solemnity to that which is observed when their dead are deposited in the tomb: this occupies some time. I never witnessed the movements at Kraabaallah,—the season of the year, the confusion, and the anticipated feuds between Sheahs and Soonies, ever deterred me from gratifying my curiosity. It is always expected that the bad feelings between the two sects, amongst the lower orders of the people, may produce a real battle on the imitative ground of Kraabaallah; and I have heard of many such terminations of the Mahurrum at Lucknow, where the enthusiastic Sheahs and Soonies—having reserved their long hatred for a favourable opportunity of giving it vent,[23]—have found an early grave on the very ground to which their Tazia has been consigned. Private quarrels are often reserved for decision on the field of Kraabaallah.

I may here remark, swords form a part of every man's daily costume, from the king to the poorest peasant; save only the devout men, who having forsaken the world have no occasion for a sword. I have often heard them say, 'My trust is not resting on a morsel of steel, but on the great mercy of my God'.—'What shall I defend? my life? Where is the arm that can assault me without the permission of my God; if He ordains it, should I murmur, or ward off the blow?'—'Is it my worldly goods I am to defend? From whose bounty have I received them? Is not the great Giver able to defend His gifts? and if He wills that I should lose them, what shall I say, but as Yoube[24] (Job) said, "It is the Lord, to do His own will"; blessed be His great name for ever.' These are the sentiments of the devout men of all creeds; and these are likewise the exemplary opinions of some good Mussulmauns I have known in India.

Returned to their home, the rich men are occupied in dispensing benefits among the poor. Food, money, and clothes, are distributed in nearly as great proportions as when they have to mourn over a recent separation by death from a beloved relative. The clothes worn during Mahurrum are never retained for the next occasion, but always distributed amongst the poor, who derive so many advantages from the annual commemoration of Mahurrum, that the philanthropic heart will rather be pleased than vexed at the zeal which produces such a harvest of benefits to the necessitous.

The riches of a native city may be calculated by the immense sums expended at Mahurrum every year; and if no greater advantage be derived from the gorgeous display of the wealthy, than the stimulus to honest industry amongst the several trades, whose labour is brought into use on these occasions, there is enough in the result to excuse the expenditure of surplus cash in apparent trifles. This, however, is strictly the result, not the design, of those expensive displayers at Mahurrum, who are actuated solely by fervent zeal, in keeping a continued remembrance of the sufferings of their Emaums, and doing honour to their memory.

It is not my province either to praise or condemn, but merely to mark out what I observe of singularity in the habits, manners, and customs of the Mussulmauns, in whose domestic circles I have been so many years a sojourner. On the subject which my pen has faintly traced to your view,—the celebration of Mahurrum,—I cannot refrain from offering one remark; I think them to be actuated by so fervent a zeal, that if they could believe with me, that whatever we do in this life is for Eternity, they would still persevere in this their supposed duty of honouring their Emaums.

[1] *Mendhi* in its primary sense is the plant *Lawsonia alba*, the leaves of which are used for dyeing the hands and feet of the bride and bridegroom; hence, the marriage rites on this occasion.

[2] This edifice was built under the superintendence of Ghauzee ood deen Hyder, first King of Oude; and it is here his remains are deposited. May his soul rest in peace! [*Author*.] [This building was named after Shah Najaf or Najaf Ashraf, the scene of the martyrdom of 'Ali, 120 miles south-west of Baghdad. The capture of the Shah Najaf, in which the guns of Captain Peel played a leading part, was a notable incident in the relief of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell.—T.R.E. Holmes, *History of the Indian Mutiny* (1885), 398 ff.]

[3] The Gumti, Gomati, 'abounding in cattle'.

[4] The fish is a symbol of sovereignty, or authority emanating from the sovereign, in Hindoostaun, since the period of Timour.—Possessors of Jaghires, Collectors of Districts, &c., have permission to use the fish, in the decorations on their flags, in the way similar to our armorial bearings. In Oude the fish is represented in many useful articles—pleasure boats, carriages, &c. Some of the King's Chobdhaars carry a staff representing a gold or silver fish. [*Author*.] [The Order of the Fish (*mahi maratib*) is said to have been founded by Khusru Parviz, King of Persia (A.D. 591-628), and thence passed to the Moghul Emperors of Delhi and to the Court of Oudh.—W.H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections*, ed. V.A. Smith, 135 ff.]

[5] Nasir-ud-din Haidar, son of Ghazi-ud-din Haidar, whom he succeeded in 1827, died, poisoned by his own family, in 1837. 'He differed from his father, Ghazi-ud-din Haidar, in being considerably more debauched and disreputable. His father had been an outwardly decent hedonist and voluptuary, but the son was under no restraints of any sort or kind, and it is probable that his character was not unfavourably depicted in that highly

coloured sketch, "The Private Life of an Eastern King" (by W. Knighton, 1855). "Any one", we are told, "was his friend who would drink with him," and his whole reign was one continued satire upon the subsidiary and protected system.'—H.C. Irwin, *The Garden of India*, p. 117.

[6] *Harkara*, 'a messenger, orderly'.

[7] *Palki*, the common palanquin or litter; *chandol*, usually carried by four men at each end (a drawing representing one carried by twelve men will be found in N. Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, iv. 32, and see ii. 76 f.;) *miyana*, a middle-sized litter out of which the type used by Europeans was developed; the Anglo-Indian 'dhooly', properly *duli*; the *rath* is a kind of bullock-carriage, often with four wheels, used by women and by portly merchants.

[8] Known as 'Ashura.

[9] See a graphic account of the procession at Bombay in Sir G. Birdwood, *Sva*, 177 ff.

[10] *Jilaudar, Jalaudar*, properly an attendant holding the bridle of a mounted officer or magnate.

[11] The afthaadah is a sun embroidered on crimson velvet, both sides the same, and fixed on a circular framework, about two yards in circumference; this is attached to a silver or gold staff, the circle deeply and fully flounced with gold brocade, or rich silk bound with silver ribands. The person riding is sheltered from the rays of the sun by the afthaadah being carried in an elevated position. [*Author*.] (See p. 38.)

[12] *Chobdar*, 'a stick-or staff-bearer'.

[13] *Sontabardar*, 'a bearer of the silver stick or mace'.

[14] *Chhata*, a mark of dignity in the East.

[15] *Danka*, 'a kettle-drum'.

[16] *Loban, luban*, frankincense, olibanum, procured from various species of *Boswellia*.

[17] As early as A.D. 1000 the people of Baghdad used to throw dust and ashes about the streets, and dress in black sackcloth on the anniversary of the death of Husain (Ockley, *History of the Saracens*, 418). The custom was common among the Hebrews (Isaiah iii. 26, xlvii. 1; Job ii. 8, & c.). Robertson Smith suggests that the dust was originally taken from the grave, and the ashes from the funeral pyre (*Religion, of the Semites*, 413).

[18] *Barqandaz*, 'lightning-darter'.

[19] *Charkhi*; the description is reproduced, without acknowledgement, by Mrs. Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, i. 299.

[20] The practice of offering food to the dead is an Indian innovation on Musalman practice; it is based on the Hindu custom of offering flour-balls (*pinda*) to the spirit of the dead man.

[21] This was a Hebrew practice, condemned by the prophets (2 Samuel xv. 30; Ezekiel xxiv. 17).

[22] *Tamjhan, thamjan*, the Anglo-Indian 'tonjon' or 'tomjohn', the derivation of which is obscure. See Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*[2], 930 f.

[23] Ill-feeling between Sunnis and Shi'ahs is not universal in India. 'Though the Sunnis consider the Shi'ah observances as impious, they look on with the contempt of indifference. The fact that the British Government punishes all who break the peace may have something to do with this. Still the Sunni and the Shi'ah in India live on much better terms, and have more respect for each other than the Turk has for the Persian, or the Persian for the Turk. Some Musalman poets, indeed, are both Sunnis and Shi'ahs.'—E. Sell, *The Faith of Islam*, 292 f.; cf. p. 14.

[24] Aiyub.

LETTER V

Time.—How divided in Hindoostaun.—Observances after Mahurrum.—Luxuries and enjoyments resumed.—Black dye used by the ladies.—Their nose-ring.—Number of rings worn in their ears.—Mode of dressing their hair.—Aversion to our tooth-brushes.—Toilet of the ladies.—The Pyjaamahs.—The Ungeeah (bodice).—The Courtie.—The Deputtah.—Reception of a superior or elder amongst the ladies.—Their fondness for jewels.—Their shoes.—The state of society amongst the Mussulmaun ladies.—Their conversational endowments.—Remarks upon the fashion and duty of beards.

In my last I alluded to the 'third watch'; it will now, perhaps, be necessary to explain the divisions of time, as observed by the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun.

The day is divided into four equal parts, or watches, denominated purrhs[1]; as, first purrh, second purrh, &c. The night is also divided into four purrhs, each of which is subdivided into ghurries[2] (hours), varying in number with the changes of season; the longest days require eight ghurries to one purrh; the shortest, only six. The same division is observed for the night. The day is reckoned from the earliest dawn to the last decline of light:—there is very little twilight in the Upper Provinces of India.

By this method of calculating time, you will understand that they have no occasion for those useful, correct, mechanical time-keepers, in general use in Europe; but they have a simple method of measuring the hour, by means of a brass vessel, with a small aperture at the bottom, which, being floated on a tank or large pan of water, one drop to a second of time forces its way through the aperture into the floating vessel, on which marks are made outside and in, to direct the number of ghurries by the depth of water drawn into it; and in some places, a certain division of time is marked by the sinking of the vessel. Each hour, as it passes, is struck by the man on duty with a hammer on a broad plate of bell-metal, suspended to the branch of a tree, or to a rail;—the gong of an English showman at the country fairs is the exact resemblance of the metal plates used in India for striking the hours on, and must, I think, have been introduced into England from the East.

The durwaun (gate-keeper), or the chokeedhars (watchmen), keep the time.[3] In most establishments the watchmen are on guard two at a time, and are relieved at every watch, day and night. On these men devolves the care of observing the advance of time by the floating vessel, and striking the hour, in which duty they are required to be punctual, as many of the Mussulmauns' services of prayer are scrupulously performed at the appointed hours, which will be more particularly explained when their creed is brought forward in a future Letter; and now, after this digression, I will pursue my subject.

When a member of the Mussulmaun family dies, the master of the house mourns forty days, during which period the razor is laid aside.[4] In the same manner the devout Mussulmaun mourns every year for his martyred Emaums; this, however, is confined to the most religious men; the general practice of the many is to throw off their mourning garb and restore the razor to its duties on the third day after the observances of Mahurrum have terminated.

It is stated, on the authority of ancient Arabian writers, on whose veracity all Mussulmauns rely, that the head of Hosein being taken to Yuzeed, one of his many wives solicited and received the head, which she gave to the family of the martyred leader, who were prisoners to the King, and that they contrived to have it conveyed to Kraabaallah, where it was deposited in the same grave with his body on the fortieth day after the battle.[5]

When a death occurs in a Mussulmaun family, the survivor provides dinners on the third, seventh, and fortieth days succeeding, in memory of the deceased person; these dinners are sent in trays to the immediate relatives and friends of the party,—on which sacred occasion all the poor and the beggars are sought to share the rich food provided. The like customs are observed for Hosein every year. The third day offering is chiefly composed of sugar, ghee, and flour, and called meetah[6]; it is of the consistence of our rice-puddings, and whether the dainty is sent to a king or a beggar there is but one style in the presentation—all is served in the common brown earthen dish,—in imitation of the humility of Hosein and his family, who seldom used any other in their domestic circle. The dishes of meetah are accompanied with the many varieties of bread common to Hindoostaun, without leaven, as sheah-maul,[7] bacherkaunie,[8] chapaatie,[9] &c.; the first two have milk and ghee mixed with the flour, and nearly resemble our pie-crust. I

must here stay to remark one custom I have observed amongst Natives: they never cook food whilst a dead body remains in the house;[10] as soon as it is known amongst a circle of friends that a person is dead, ready-dressed dinners are forwarded to the house for them, no one fancying he is conferring a kindness, but fulfilling a duty.

The third day after the accomplishment of the Mahurrum ceremonies is a busy time with the inmates of zeenahnahs, when generally the mourning garb is thrown off, and preparations commence at an early hour in the morning for bathing and replacing the banished ornaments. Abstinence and privation being no longer deemed meritorious by the Mussulmauns, the pawn—the dear delightful pawn, which constitutes the greatest possible luxury to the Natives,—pours in from the bazaar, to gladden the eye and rejoice the heart of all classes, who after this temporary self-denial enjoy the luxury with increased zest.

Again the missee[11] (a preparation of antimony) is applied to the lips, the gums, and occasionally to the teeth of every married lady, who emulate each other in the rich black produced;—such is the difference of taste as regards beauty;—where we admire the coral hue, with the females of Hindoostaun, Nature is defaced by the application of black dye. The eyelid also is pencilled afresh with prepared black, called kaarjil[12]: the chief ingredient in this preparation is lampblack. The eyebrow is well examined for fear an ill-shaped hair should impair the symmetry of that arch esteemed a beauty in every clime, though all do not, perhaps, exercise an equal care with Eastern dames to preserve order in its growth. The mayndhie is again applied to the hands and feet, which restores the bright red hue deemed so becoming and healthy.

The nose once more is destined to receive the nutt[13] (ring) which designates the married lady; this ring, I have before mentioned, is of gold wire, the pearls and ruby between them are of great value, and I have seen many ladies wear the nutt as large in circumference as the bangle on her wrist, though of course much lighter; it is often worn so large, that at meals they are obliged to hold it apart from the face with the left hand, whilst conveying food to the mouth with the other. This nutt, however, from ancient custom, is indispensable with married women, and though they may find it disagreeable and inconvenient, it cannot possibly be removed, except for Mahurrum, from the day of their marriage until their death or widowhood, without infringing on the originality of their customs, in adhering to which they take so much pride.

The ears of the females are pierced in many places; the gold or silver rings return to their several stations after Mahurrum, forming a broad fringe of the precious metals on each side the head; but when they dress for great events,—as paying visits or receiving company,—these give place to strings of pearls and emeralds, which fall in rows from the upper part of the ear to the shoulder in a graceful, elegant style. My ayah, a very plain old woman, has no less than ten silver rings in one ear and nine in the other,[15] each of them having pendant ornaments; indeed, her ears are literally fringed with silver.

After the hair has undergone all the ceremonies of washing, drying, and anointing with the sweet jessamine oil of India, it is drawn with great precision from the forehead to the

back, where it is twisted into a queue which generally reaches below the waist; the ends are finished with strips of red silk and silver ribands entwined with the hair, and terminating with a good-sized rosette. The hair is jet black, without a single variation of tinge, and luxuriantly long and thick, and thus dressed remains for the week,—about the usual interval between their laborious process of bathing;—nor can they conceive the comfort other people find in frequent brushing and combing the hair. Brushes for the head and the teeth have not yet been introduced into Native families, nor is it ever likely they will, unless some other material than pigs' bristles can be rendered available by the manufacturers for the present purposes of brushes. The swine is altogether considered abominable to Mussulmauns; and such is their detestation of the unclean animal that the most angry epithet from a master to a slave would be to call him 'seur'[15] (swine).

It must not, however, be supposed that the Natives neglect their teeth; they are the most particular people living in this respect, as they never eat or drink without washing their mouths before and after meals; and as a substitute for our tooth-brush, they make a new one every day from the tender branch of a tree or shrub,—as the pomegranate, the neem,[16] babool,[17] &c. The fresh-broken twig is bruised and made pliant at the extremity, after the bark or rind is stripped from it, and with this the men preserve the enamelled-looking white teeth which excite the admiration of strangers; and which, though often envied, I fancy, are never surpassed by European ingenuity.

As I have rather prematurely introduced the Native ladies' style of dress into this Letter, I may as well conclude the whole business of their toilet under the present head, instead of reserving the detail of the subject for a future Letter when the zeenahnah is to be described, and accordingly proceed to tell you that the ladies' pyjaamahs are formed of rich satin, or gold cloth, goolbudden,[18] or mussheroo[19] (striped washing silks manufactured at Benares), fine chintz,—English manufacture having the preference,—silk or cotton ginghams,—in short, all such materials are used for this article of female dress as are of sufficiently firm texture, down to the white calico of the country, suited to the means of the wearer. By the most fashionable females they are worn very full below the knee, and reach to the feet, which are partially covered by the fulness, the extremity finished and the seams are bound with silver riband; a very broad silver riband binds the top of the pyjaamah; this being double has a zarbund[20] (a silk net cord) run through, by which this part of the dress is confined at the waist. The ends of the zarbund are finished with rich tassels of gold and silver, curiously and expressly made for this purpose, which extend below the knees: for full dress, these tassels are rendered magnificent with pearls and jewels.

One universal shape is adopted in the form of the ungeeah[21] (bodice), which is, however, much varied in the material and ornamental part; some are of gauze or net, muslin, &c., the more transparent in texture the more agreeable to taste, and all are more or less ornamented with spangles and silver trimmings. It is made to fit the bust with great exactness, and to fasten behind with strong cotton cords; the sleeves are very short and tight, and finished with some fanciful embroidery or silver riband. Even the women servants pride themselves on pretty ungeeahs, and all will strive to have a little finery about them, however coarse the material it is formed of may happen to be. They are never

removed at night but continue to be worn a week together, unless its beauty fades earlier, or the ornamental parts tarnish through extreme heat.

With the ungeeah is worn a transparent courtie (literally translated shirt) of thread net; this covers the waistband of the pyjaamah but does not screen it; the seams and hems are trimmed with silver or gold ribands.

The deputtah is a useful envelope, and the most graceful part of the whole female costume. In shape and size, a large sheet will convey an idea of the deputtah's dimensions; the quality depends on choice or circumstances; the preference is given to our light English manufacture of leno or muslin for every-day wear by gentlewomen; but on gala days, gold and silver gauze tissues are in great request, as is also fine India muslin manufactured at Decca—transparent and soft as the web of the gossamer spider;—this is called shubnum[22] (night dew), from its delicate texture, and is procured at a great expense, even in India; some deputtahs are formed of gold-worked muslin, English crape, coloured gauze, &c. On ordinary occasions ladies wear them simply bound with silver riband, but for dress they are richly trimmed with embroidery and bullion fringes, which add much to the splendour of the scene, when two or three hundred females are collected together in their assemblies. The deputtah is worn with much original taste on the back of the head, and falls in graceful folds over the person; when standing, it is crossed in front, one end partially screening the figure, the other thrown over the opposite shoulder.

I should say they rarely stand; but when distinguished guests, or their elders amongst relatives, are announced, this mark of respect is never omitted. It is an interesting sight, as they have much ease and grace in their manner, which no tutoring could impart; they rise and arrange their drapery, advance a few steps from their place in the hall, and embrace their visitor thrice in due form, ending by salaaming, with the head bowed very low towards the ground and the open hand raised to the forehead, three times in succession, with solemnity and dignity.

I have told you, in a former Letter, how many precious ornaments were laid aside on the eve of Mahurrum, and need hardly describe them again. Their fondness for good jewellery perhaps exceeds the same propensity in any other females on the globe: the rude workmanship of Native jewellers is never an object of weighty consideration, provided the precious metals are unalloyed in quality. The same may be remarked in their selection of jewels: pearls of the largest size, even when discoloured or misshapen, are selected in preference to the most regular in form and colour, of a smaller size; large diamonds, having flaws, are often preferred to smaller ones most perfect. The gentlemen are good judges of precious stones, and evince some taste in their style of ornaments; they are worn on their turbans, and in necklaces or harrhs[23]—rings, armlets, &c.; but these are all laid aside at seasons of devotion, when they are restricted wearing, not only ornaments, but mixed articles of silk and wool in their apparel. The most religious men and women invariably abstain from ornamental dress in every way, deeming it frivolous vanity, and inconsistent with that they profess—'to be seeking God, and forsaking worldly things'.

The ladies never wear stockings,[24] and only cover the feet with shoes when pacing across their court-yard, which bounds their view and their walks. Nevertheless, there is a fashion and taste about the ladies' shoes, which is productive of much emulation in zeenahnah life;—they are splendidly worked in many patterns, with gold and silver spangles, variously-coloured small seed beads and embroidery—the whole one mass of glittering metal;—they are made with sharp points curling upwards, some nearly reaching half-way to the knees, and always worn down at the heel, as dressing slippers; the least costly for their every-day wear are of gold embroidery on velvet; the less opulent condescend to wear tinsel work, and the meanest servants yellow or red cloth with silver binding. The same style of shoes are worn by the males as by the females; I have seen some young men with green shagreen slippers for the rainy season; these are made with a high heel and look unseemly. The fashion of shoes varies with the times in this country, as well as in others—sometimes it is genteel to have small points to the shoes; at another, the points are long and much curled; but they still retain the preference for pointed shoes whatever be the fashion adopted.

The greatest novelty in the way of shoes, which came under my observation in India, was a pair of silver embroidery, small pointed, and very neatly made: on the points and round the instep small silver bells were fastened, which produced harmony with every step, varied by the quick or more gentle paces of the wearer; these were a present to me from a lady of distinction in Oude. Upon visiting this lady on one occasion, my black silk slippers, which I had left at the entrance (as is the custom here), had most likely attracted the curiosity of the Begum's slaves, for when that lady attended me to the threshold, they could nowhere be found; and I was in danger of being obliged to soil my stockings by walking shoeless to my palkie, across the court-yard. In this dilemma the lady proffered me the pair here described; I was much amused with the novelty of the exchange, upon stepping into the musical shoes, which, however they may be prized by Native ladies, did not exactly suit my style of dress, nor convenience in walking, although I must always remember the Begum's attention with gratitude.

The ladies' society is by no means insipid or without interest; they are naturally gifted with good sense and politeness, fond of conversation, shrewd in their remarks, and their language is both correct and refined. This, at first, was an enigma to me, considering that their lives are spent in seclusion, and that their education was not conducted on European principles; the mystery, however, has passed away upon an intimate acquaintance with the domestic habits of the people. The men with whom genteel women converse, are generally well educated, and from the naturally inquisitive disposition of the females, not a word escapes the lips of a father, husband, or brother, without an inquiry as to its meaning, which having once ascertained, is never forgotten, because their attention is not diverted by a variety of pursuits, or vain amusements. The women look up to the opinions of their male relatives with the same respect as children of other climes are accustomed to regard their tutor or governess,—considering every word pronounced as worthy of imitation, and every sentiment expressed, as a guide to their own. Thus the habit of speaking correctly is so familiar to the females of Mussulmaun society, that even women servants, long accustomed to serve in zeenahnahs, may be readily distinguished by their language from the same class of people in attendance on European ladies.

P.S. All good Mussulmauns are expected to wear their beards, by command of the Prophet; so says my informant, who is of 'the faith', and wears his beard, in accordance with the injunction of his Lawgiver. In modern times, however, the Mussulmauns have seen fit to modify the strict letter of the law, and we perceive generally, mustachios only reserved on the upper lip. This ornament is trained with the nicest care amongst the fashionable young men of the present day, and made to creep over the lip at each corner of the mouth with curling points; well-trained mustachios being with them much esteemed.

The religious Mussulmauns become more scrupulous as they advance in knowledge of their faith, when they allow their beards to grow and their heads to be shaven; if the hair turns white—while to look well is an object of interest—a dye is resorted to, composed of mayndhie and indigo, which restores its youthful appearance, and the beard retains its black glossy hue for about six weeks, when the process of dyeing is again made the business of a convenient hour.[25] The vanities of the world ceasing to charm (the heart being fixed on more important subjects), the beard is permitted to retain its natural colour; and, truly, the venerable countenance of an aged Mussulmaun, with a silvery-white beard flowing nearly to his girdle, is a picture that would interest every beholder well acquainted with Bible history.

When the Mussulmaun determines on fulfilling the command of his Lawgiver, in making the pilgrimage to Mecca, the beard is allowed to grow whatever be his age; and this may be considered a badge of their faith, none being admitted at 'the Holy House' who have not this passport on their chin.

[1] *Pahar*.

[2] *Ghari*, about twenty-four minutes.

[3] *Darwan, chaukidar*.

[4] See p. 64.

[5] According to the Shi'ahs, Zainu-l-'Abidin obtained from Yazid, after forty days, the head of Husain, and brought it to Karbala. They deny that the head is at Cairo and the body at Karbala. Others say that the head was sent to Medina, and buried near the grave of Fatimah.—Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 40; Ockley, *History of the Saracens*, 412, 415 note.

[6] *Mitha*, 'sweet'.

[7] *Shirmal*, bread made with milk.

[8] *Baqirkhani*, a kind of crisp bread or cake, like piecrust, made of milk, sugar, and flour.

[9] *Chapati*, the griddle cake, the standard food of the people.

[10] No food should be cooked in the house of a Musalman during the forty days of mourning. Sir J.G. Frazer thinks that this is due to the risk of eating the ghost clinging to the food (*Journal Anthropological Institute*, xv. (1886) 92 ff.).

[11] *Missi*, from *mis*, 'copper', because copper-filings form its chief ingredient, to which are added myrobalan, gall-nuts, vitriol, &c. The custom is based on the Arab admiration for the rose-red colour of the inner lip.—Burton, *A Thousand Nights and A Night*, iii. 365.

[12] *Kajal*.

[13] *Nath*, a love-token presented to the bride by the bridegroom. The very mention of it is considered indelicate.

[14] They generally adopt an odd number.

[15] *Suar*.

[16] *Nim* (*Melia Azidirachta*).

[17] *Babul* (*Acacia arabica*).

[18] *Gulbadan*, 'with body like a rose', a fine silk fabric.

[19] *Mashru* 'conformable to law', a silk-cotton cloth, which—but not pure silk—a Musulman can wear during prayer.

[20] *Zerband*, 'fastening below', 'a girth'.

[21] *Angiya*.

[22] *Shabnam*. The finest varieties of these cloths were made at Dacca. Aurungzeb is said to have remonstrated with his daughter for wearing what he thought to be a *Coa vestis*. She answered that she wore seven folds of this cloth.

[23] *Har*, a necklace, an embroidered garland thrown round the neck of a visitor on his departure, as a mark of respect. These garlands were substituted for the pearl necklaces which, in former days, were presented to guests.

[24] 'Stockings are never worn [in the Zenana]: but I have seen little coloured stockings, made of the wool from Cashmir, worn at times

during the cold season.'—Mrs. Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, i. 456.

[25] According to the traditions, the Prophet said, 'Change the whiteness of your hair, but not with anything black'. The first Caliph is said to have dyed his beard red with henna. Nowadays indigo is largely used.

LETTER VI

The Mussulmaun religion.—Sectarians.—Their difference of faith.—History of the Soonies.—The Caliphas Omir, Osman, Aboubuker, &c.—Mahumud's parting charge to Ali.—Omir's jealousy of Ali.—The Khoraun.—How compiled.—The Calipha Omir held in detestation.—Creed of the Sheahs.—Funeral service.—Opinions of the Mussulmauns respecting the Millennium.—The foundation of their faith exhibited.—Sentiments of the most devout followers of Mahumud.—Bridge of Sirraat, the Scales, &c. explained.—Emaum Mhidhie.—Prophecy of his reappearance.—Its early fulfilment anticipated.—Discourse with the Meer Hadjee Shaah on this subject.

I do not presume to offer opinions on the nature, substance, or character, of the Mussulmaun Faith; but confine myself to the mere relation of such facts as I have received from the best possible authority, viz. the religious men who are of that faith, and live in strict accordance with the tenets they profess.

There are two sects of the Mussulmaun persuasion, as I have before remarked, viz. the Sheahs and the Soonies. The leaders of the former are called Emaums; and those of the latter Caliphas. The Sheahs acknowledge Ali and his immediate descendants (eleven in number) 'the right and only lawful Emaums', in succession, after Mahumud. The Soonies declare the Caliphas—as Omir, Aboubuker, &c.—to be their lawful leaders after Mahumud.

I do not find that there is any great difference in the points of faith between the two sects; they are equally guided by the same laws and ordinances inculcated by Mahumud in the Khoraun;—the Sheahs pursuing the pattern of observances traced out in the life and manners of Ali and his descendants;—and the Soonies taking their examples from the manners of the Caliphas. There is a distinguishing method in ablutions before prayers, and also in the manner of bowing and prostrating in their devotional exercises;[1] this difference, however, has nothing to do with their faith,—the subject and form of their daily prayer is one; but both sects have extra services for particular occasions, agreeable to the instruction of their favourite leaders. The Namaaz (daily prayer) was taught by Mahumud to his followers, every line of which is religiously reverenced by Mussulmauns, and cannot be altered by sectarian principles.

The Mussulmaun faith is founded on three roots; from these spring, with the Sheahs, six branches; with the Soonies, five. The roots are as follows:—

First.—'There is but one God, self existing; ever was, and ever will be; in Whom is all Power, Majesty, and Dominion; by Whom all things are, and were created. With Whom is neither partner or substance:[2] and He alone is to be worshipped.'

Second.—'The Prophets were all true; and all their writings to be relied on, with a true faith.'

Third.—'The resurrection of the dead is certain.'

The Sheahs' branches, or emanations, from the three roots of their faith, are as follow:—

1st.—'Namaaz,'[3] (prayer five times daily); a necessary duty, never to be omitted.

2nd.—'Rumzaun,'[4] (fasting) the whole thirty days of that month; a service acceptable to God from His humble creatures.

3rd.—'The Hadje,'[5] (pilgrimage to Mecca); commanded by Mahumud, and therefore to be obeyed.

4th.—'Zuckhaut;'[6] the fortieth portion of all worldly goods to be set apart every year (an offering to God) for the service of the poor.

5th.—To fight in the road of God, or in His service, against the idolaters.

6th.—To believe that the twelve Emaums were the true and lawful leaders, after Mahumud; to follow in their path, or example, and to succour and defend the Syaads, their descendants.

The Soonies omit the last branch in their profession of faith; with this solitary exception, the creed of the two sects, from all I can understand, is the same. The Sheahs are those who celebrate Mahurrum: in my description of that event will be seen the zealous partizans of the sect; and here may be introduced with propriety, some account of the opposite party denominated Soonies.

The word Calipha[7] implies the master or head of any trade, profession, or calling,—as the master of the tailors, the head master of a college or school, &c. Omir was the first to usurp the title after Mahumud's death, and to him succeeded Aboubuker, and then Ausmaun (Osman).[8]

Aboubuker may have claimed some relationship to Mahumud;—he was converted by his preaching from idolatry to the faith;—he gave his daughter in marriage to Mahumud, by whom two sons were born to him, Ishmael and Ibrahim.[9] 'An angel appeared to Mahumud, saying, Which of thy family shall be taken from thee, Oh, Mahumud! such is

the command of God; two of thy youth must die, and I am sent to demand of thee whether it is thy wish Ishmael and Ibrahim, thine own sons, shall be taken from this world, or Hasan and Hosein, the sons of Fatima thy daughter?' The historian continues, after dwelling much on the virtues of the Prophet's only daughter, 'Such was the affection of Mahumud for his daughter Fatima and her children, and so well he knew the purity of their hearts, that he hesitated not a moment in replying, "If the Lord graciously permits His servant to choose, I freely offer my two sons Ishmael and Ibrahim; that Hasan and Hosein may live by His mercy "'.

Omir was also a convert to the faith Mahumud taught: he likewise gave a daughter in marriage to Mahumud;[10] by whom, however, the same historian remarks, his house was not peopled. His only daughter, Fatima, lived to add numbers to his family: she was born to him by the pious female (a widow) who was his first wife[11] and to whom he was united before he commenced his work of conversion. Ali, to whom Fatima was married, was the nephew of Mahumud, and from this union the Syaad race descend to the present day. The Prophet observing real piety in Ali, designed him not only to be the most suitable husband for his amiable daughter, but the best qualified person to be chosen as his successor, when he should be called by 'the hand of death'; and in the most public manner gave charge of his flock to Ali, not long before that event occurred. Mahumud's speech to Ali on that occasion is much reverenced by the Sheah sect;—it has been translated for me by my husband, and is as follows:—

'You, my son, will suffer many persecutions in the cause of religion; many will be the obstructions to your preaching, for I see they are not all as obedient and faithful as yourself. Usurpers of the authority, delegated to you, will arise, whose views are not pure and holy as your own; but let my admonitions dwell on your mind, remember my advice without swerving. The religion I have laboured to teach, is, as yet, but as the buds shooting forth from the tree; tender as they are, the rude blasts of dissension may scatter them to the winds, and leave the parent tree without a leaf:—but suffered to push forth its produce quietly, the hand of Time will ripen and bring to perfection that which has been the business of my awakened life to cultivate. Never, my son, suffer your sword to be unsheathed in the justice of your cause; I exhort you to bear this injunction on your mind faithfully; whatever may be the provocations you receive, or insults offered to your person,—I know this trial is in store for my son,—remember the cause you are engaged in; suffer patiently; never draw your sword against the people who profess the true faith, even though they are but by name Mussulmauns.

'Against the enemies of God, I have already given you directions; you may fight for Him—the only true God,—but never against Him, or His faithful servants.'

When Mahumud was numbered with the dead, Omir soon set himself forward as the lawful successor; he was of good address, and insinuating manners, and succeeded in drawing 'numbers to his threshold'. He preached the same doctrine Mahumud had taught, but sensual indulgence and early developed ambition were more strong in his heart than the faith he preached. Omir grew jealous of Ali's virtues and forbearance, under the various trials of oppression and injustice he chose to visit him with; and resolved that, if

possible, he would destroy not only Ali, but his whole family. Omir caused his house to be fired treacherously, but as the historians say, 'the mercy of God watched over the sanctified family'; they escaped from the flames, with no other loss than that of their small property.

The Khoraun was not the work of any particular period in the life of Mahumud. It was not compiled into a book until after Mahumud's death, who was totally unacquainted with letters; each chapter having been conveyed by the angel Gabriel[12] to Mahumud, his inspired memory enabled him to repeat, verbatim, the holy messenger's words to his disciples and converts when assembled as was their daily custom. To as many as committed verse, chapter, or portion to memory, by this oral communication, Mahumud rewarded with the highest seats in his assembly (meaning nearest his person); and to those who wished for employment, he gave the command of detachments sent out against the infidels.

The whole Khoraun was thus conveyed to Mahumud by the angel Gabriel, at many different periods of his mission; and by daily repetition, did he instil into the memory of his followers that mental scripture. But when Omir usurped the right to lead, he ambitiously planned for himself a large share of popularity by causing the Khoraun to be committed to paper, and he accordingly gave orders, that the best scribes should be employed to convey its precepts to writing.

Ali had been engaged in the same employment for some time, perceiving the future benefit to the faith which would accrue from such a labour, and on the very day, when Omir was seated in form to receive the work of his scribes, Ali also presented himself with his version of the Khoraun. It is asserted that Omir treated him with some indignity, and gave the preference to the volume his own scribes had prepared, desiring Ali, nevertheless, to leave that he had transcribed with him, though he candidly told him he never intended it should be 'the Book for the People'. Ali found, on this trying occasion, the benefit of Mahumud's advice, to keep his temper subdued for the trial, and withdrew with his book clasped to his heart, assuring Omir, that the volume should only be the property of his descendants; and that when the twelfth Emaum, prophesied by Mahumud, should disappear from the eye of man, the Khoraun he had written should also disappear, until that Emaum returned, with whom the book he had written should again be found.

The name of Omir is detestable to all lovers of literature, or admirers of ancient history and valuable records. By his orders, the bath was heated with the valuable collection of manuscripts, which it had been the work of ages to complete.[13] Omir was told that the people valued the writings of the ancients, and that they were displeased at this irreparable destruction of valuable records; he asked if the people were not satisfied with the Khoraun? and if satisfied, why should they seek for other knowledge than that book contained? declaring it to be an useless employment of time, to be engaged in any other readings. They say the collection of books thus destroyed was so vast, that it served the purpose, to which it was applied, for many successive days. I have thus far given the accounts I have received of the origin of the two sects amongst the Mussulmauns from good authority. My husband says, that in Hindoostaun the two sects may be nearly equal

in number;[14] in Persia the Sheahs certainly prevail; in Turkey all are Soonies; and in Arabia the Sheahs are supposed to preponderate. On the whole, perhaps, the two sects are about equally divided.

The Mussulmauns' Creed, of the Sheah sect, is as follows:—

'I believe in one God, supreme over all, and Him alone do I worship.

'I believe that Mahumud was the creature of God, the Creator; I believe that Mahumud was the messenger of God, (the Lord of messengers); and that he was the last of the prophets. I believe that Ali was the chief of the faithful, the head of all the inheritors of the law, and the true leader appointed of God; consequently to be obeyed by the faithful. Also I believe that Hasan and Hosein, the sons of Ali, and Ali son of Hosein, and Mahumud son of Ali, and Jaufur son of Mahumud, and Moosa son of Jaufur, and Ali son of Moosa, and Mahumud son of Ali, and Ali son of Mahumud, and Hasan son of Ali, and Mhidhie (the standing proof) son of Hasan; the mercy of God be upon them! these were the true leaders of the faithful, and the proof of God was conveyed by them to the people.'[15]

This creed is taught to the children of both sexes, in Mussulmaun families, as soon as they are able to talk; and, from the daily repetition, is perfectly familiar to them at an early age.

I propose describing the funeral service here, as the substance of their particular faith is so intimately connected with the appointed service for the dead.

The dead body of a Mussulmaun, in about six hours after life is extinct, is placed in a kuffin[16] (coffin) and conveyed to the place of burial, with parade suited to the rank he held in life.

A tent, or the kaanaut[17] (screen), is pitched in a convenient place, where water is available near to the tomb, for the purpose of washing and preparing the dead body for interment. They then take the corpse out of the coffin and thoroughly bathe it; when dry, they rub pounded camphor on the hands, feet, knees, and forehead, these parts having, in the method of prostrating at prayer, daily touched the ground; the body is then wrapped neatly in a winding-sheet of white calico, on which has been written particular chapters from the Khoraun:[18] this done, it is taken up with great gentleness and laid in the grave on the side, with the face towards Mecca. The officiating Maulvee steps solemnly into the grave (which is much deeper and wider than ours), and with a loud voice repeats the creed, as before described; after which he says, 'These were thy good and holy leaders, O son of Adam! (here he repeats the person's names). Now when the two angels come unto thee, who are the Maccurrub[19] (messengers) from thy great and mighty God, they will ask of thee, "Who is thy Lord? Who is thy Prophet? What is thy faith? Which is thy book? Where is thy Kiblaah?[20] Who is thy Leader?"

'Then shalt thou answer the Maccurrub thus:—

'"God, greatest in glory, is my only Lord; Mahumud, my Prophet; Islaaim, my faith, (Islaaim means true faith); the Khoraun, my book; the Kaubah (Holy House at Mecca), my Kiblaah;

'"Emaum Ali, son of Aboutalib,
" Hasan and Hosein,
" Ali, surnamed Zynool Auberdene,
" Mahumud, " Baakur,
" Jaufur, " Saadick,
" Moosa, " Khazim,
" Ali, " Reezah,
" Mahumud, " Ul Jawaad,
" Ali, " Ul Hoodah,
" Hasan, " Ul Ushkeree,
" Mhidhie, the standing proof that we are waiting for.[21]

'"These are all my leaders, and they are my intercessors, with them is my love, with their enemies is my hatred, in the world of earth and in the world to come eternal."'

Then the Maulvee says:—

'Know ye for a truth, O man (repeating his name), that the God we worship is One only, Great and Glorious, Most High and Mighty God, who is above all lords, the only true God.

'Know ye also, That Mahumud is the best of the Lord's messengers.

'That Ali and his successors (before enumerated, but always here repeated) were the best of all leaders.

'That whatever came with Mahumud is true, (meaning the whole work of his mission);—Death is true; the Interrogation by Moonkih and Nykee[22] (the two angels) is true; the Resurrection is true; Destruction is true; the Bridge of Sirraat[23] is true; the Scales are true; Looking into the Book is true; Heaven and Earth are true; Hell is true; the Day of Judgment is true.

'Of these things there is no doubt—all are true; and, further, that God, the great and glorious God, will raise all the dead bodies from their graves.'

Then the Maulvee reads the following prayer or benediction, which is called Dooar[24] prayer:—

'May the Lord God, abundant in mercy, keep you with the true speech; may He lead you to the perfect path; may He grant you knowledge of Him, and of His prophets.

'May the mercy of God be fixed upon you for ever. Ameen.'

This concluded, the Maulvee quits the grave, and slowly moves forty measured paces in a line with it; then turning round, he comes again to the grave, with the same solemnity in his steps, and standing on the edge, he prays,

'O great and glorious God, we beseech Thee with humility make the earth comfortable to this Thy servant's side, and raise his soul to Thee, and with Thee may he find mercy and forgiveness.'

'Ameen, Ameen,' is responded by all present.

This ends the funeral service: the earth is closed over by the servants, &c. and, except with the very poor, the grave is never entirely forsaken day or night, during the forty days of mourning; readers of the Khoraun are paid for this service, and in the families of the nobility the grave is attended for years by those hired, who are engaged to read from that book perpetually, relieving each other at intervals day and night.

They believe that when the Maulvee quits the grave, the angels enter to interrogate the dead body, and receive the confession of his particular faith; this is the object of the Maulvee's retiring forty paces, to give the angels time to enter on their mission to the dead.

The Mussulmauns all believe that Mhidhie, the standing proof as he is called, will visit the earth at a future period; they are said to possess prophecies, that lead them to expect the twelve hundred and sixtieth year of the Hegirah, as the time for his coming. The Soonies say, this Emaum has yet to be born:—the Sheahs believe that Emaum Mhidhie is the person to reappear. Some believe he is still on earth, dwelling, as they conjecture, in the wilds and forests; and many go so far as to assert, that Mhidhie visits (without being recognized) the Holy House of Mecca annually, on the great day of sacrifice; but I cannot find any grounds they have for this opinion.[25]

They also possess a prophecy, on which much dependance is placed, that 'When the four quarters of the globe contain Christian inhabitants, and when the Christians approach the confines of Kaabah, then may men look for that Emaum who is to come'. And it is the general belief amongst Mussulmauns, founded on the authority of their most revered and valued writers, that Emaum Mhidhie will appear with Jesus Christ at his second coming; and with whom, they declare and firmly believe, he will act in concert to purge the world of sin and wickedness. When, they add, 'all men shall be of one mind and one faith'.

Of the three principal Roots of the Mussulmauns' faith, little need be further said in explanation. I have had various opportunities of learning their undisguised thoughts, and wish only to impart what the people are, who are so little known to the world in general. All persons having had the opportunity of studying the peculiarities of their particular faith, will, I think, give them due credit, that reverence for, and belief in God, forms a prominent trait in their character and faith: 'The English translation of the Khoraun by

Sale, (imperfect as all works must be, where the two languages are inadequate to speak each other's meaning,) will tell without a commentary, that the worship of God was the foundation on which Mahumud built his code of laws; and that the prophets were all acknowledged by him as messengers sent from God to His people, in every age of the world; and, lastly, that Mahumud was the Prophet, who came when the people of the earth, vicious and profane, had fallen into the most dissolute habits, worshipping idols instead of God.' This passage is the sentiment expressed to me by a worthy man, and a true Mussulmaun; I have traced it out for the sake of explaining what is in the hearts of the Mussulmauns of the present day.

When I have conversed with some of them on the improbability of Mahumud's prophetic mission, I have been silenced by a few words, 'How many prophets were sent to the Israelites?'—'Many.'—'You cannot enumerate them? then, is it too much to be probable that God's mercy should have been graciously extended to the children of Ishmael? they also are Abraham's seed. The Israelites had many prophets, in all of whom we believe; the Ishmaelites have one Prophet only, whose mission was to draw men from idolatry to the true God. All men, they add will be judged according to their fidelity in the faith they have professed. It is not the outward sign which makes a man the true Mussulmaun; neither is it the mere profession of Christianity which will clear the man at the last day. Religion and faith are of the heart.'

In their collection of writings, I have had access to a voluminous work, entitled 'Hyaatool Kaaloob'[26] (Enlightener of the Heart). My husband has translated for me, occasionally, portions of this valuable work, which bears a striking similarity to our Holy Scriptures, though collected after a different manner; I have acquired, by this means, a more intimate acquaintance with the general character of the Mussulmaun's belief. This book contains all the prophets' lives, at every age of the world. It was compiled by Mahumud Baakur, first in Arabic, and afterwards translated by him into the Persian language, for the benefit of the public; and is of great antiquity—I cannot now ascertain the exact date.

The Mussulmaun belief on the subject of the resurrection is, 'When the fulness of time cometh, of which no man knoweth, then shall the earth be destroyed by fire—and after this will be the resurrection of the dead'.

The branches emanating from the roots of the Mussulmaun faith will require further explanation which shall follow in due course. I will in this letter merely add what is meant by the Bridge of Sirraat,[27] the Scales,[28] and Looking into the Book as noted in the burial service.

'The Bridge of Sirraat', they understand, is to be passed over by every person in their passage to eternity, and is represented sharp as the keenest sword.[29] The righteous will be gifted with power to pass over with the rapidity of lightning, neither harm nor inconvenience will attend them on the passage. The wicked, on the contrary, will be without help, and must be many times injured and cut down in the attempt. An idea has crept into the minds of some, that whoever offers up to God, at different periods of his life, such animals as are deemed clean and fitting for sacrifice, the same number and

kind, on their day of passing Sirraat, shall be in readiness to assist them on the passage over.

On this supposition is grounded the object of princes and nobles in India offering camels in sacrifice on the day of Buckrah Eade.[30] This event answers our Scripture account of Abraham's offering, but the Mussulmauns say, the son of Abraham so offered was Ishmael, and not Isaac. I have disputed the point with some of their learned men, and brought them to search through their authorities; in some one or two there is a doubt as to which was the son offered, but the general writers and most of the Mussulmauns themselves believe Ishmael was the offering made by Abraham.

'The Scales are true;' the Mussulmauns believe, that on the day of judgment, the good and the bad deeds of every mortal will be submitted to the scales prepared in Heaven for that purpose.

'Looking into the Book is true;' the Mussulmauns believe that every human being from their birth is attended by two angels,[31] one resting on the right shoulder the other on the left, continually; their business is to register every action of the individual they attend; when a good action is to be recorded, they beseech the Almighty in His mercy to keep the person in the good and perfect way; when evil ways are to be registered, they mourn with intercessions to God that His mercy may be extended, by granting them repentant hearts, and then, His forgiveness. Thus they explain 'Looking into the Book is true', that whatever is contained in this book will be looked into on the day of judgment, and by their deeds therein registered shall they be judged.

In the 'Hyaatool Kaaloob' is to be found the lives of the Emaums, from which is gleaned the following remarks:—

The Emaum Mhidhie was an orphan at nine years old. Alrouschid,[32] the King of Bagdad, advised by his wicked minister, resolved on destroying this boy (the last of the Emaums), fearing as he grew into favour with the people, that the power of his sovereignty would decrease.

The King sent certain soldiers to seize Mhidhie, who was at prayers in an inner room when they arrived. The soldiers demanded and were refused admittance they then forced an entrance and proceeded to the room in which the Emaum was supposed to be at prayers, they discovered him immersed to the waist in a tank of water; the soldiers desired him to get out of the water and surrender himself, he continued repeating his prayer, and appeared to take no notice of the men nor their demand. After some deliberations amongst the soldiers, they thought the water was too shallow to endanger their lives, and one entered the tank intending to take the Emaum prisoner, he sank instantly to rise no more, a second followed who shared the same fate; and the rest, deterred by the example of their brother soldiers, fled from the place, to report the failure of their plan to the King at Bagdad.

This writer reports that Emaum Mhidhie was secretly conveyed away, supposed by the interposition of Divine Providence, and was not again seen, to be recognized, on earth; yet it is believed he still lives and will remain for the fulfilment of that prophecy which sayeth:—'When Mecca is filled with Christian people Emaum Mhidhie will appear, to draw men to the true faith; and then also, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven to Mecca, there will be great slaughter amongst men; after which there will be but one faith—and then shall there be perfect peace and happiness over all the world.'

The Mussulmauns of the present age discourse much on the subject of that prophecy—particularly during the contest between the Greeks and Turks, of which however they had no very correct information, yet they fancied the time must be fast approaching, by these leading events, to the fuller accomplishment; often, when in conversation with the most religious men of the country, I have heard them declare it as their firm belief that the time was fast approaching when there should be but one mind amongst all men. 'There is but little more to finish;' 'The time draws near;' are expressions of the Mussulmauns' belief, when discoursing of the period anticipated, as prophesied in their sacred writings;—so persuaded are they of the nearness of that time. In relating the substance of my last serious conversation with the devout Meer Hadjee Shaah, I shall disclose the real sentiments of most, if not every religious reflecting, true Mussulmaun of his sect in India.

Meer Hadjee Shaah delighted in religious conversations; it was his happiest time when, in the quiet of night, the Meer, his son, translated, as I read, the Holy Bible to him. We have often been thus engaged until one or two, and even to a later hour in the morning; he remembered all he heard, and drew comparisons, in his own mind, between the two authorities of sacred writings—the Khoraun and Bible; the one he had studied through his long life, the other, he was now equally satisfied, contained the word of God; he received them both, and as the 'two witnesses' of God. The last serious conversation I had with him, was a very few days before his death; he was then nearly in as good health as he had been for the last year; his great age had weakened his frame, but he walked about the grounds with his staff, as erect as when I first saw him, and evinced nothing in his general manner that could excite a suspicion that his hours had so nearly run their course.

We had been talking of the time when peace on earth should be universal; 'My time, dear baittie[33] (daughter), is drawing to a quick conclusion. You may live to see the events foretold, I shall be in my grave; but remember, I tell you now, though I am dead, yet when Jesus Christ returns to earth, at His coming, I shall rise again from my grave; and I shall be with Him, and with Emaum Mhidhie also.'

This was the substance of his last serious conversation with me, and within one short week he was removed from those who loved to hear his voice; but he still lives in the memory of many, and those who knew his worth are reconciled by reflecting on the 'joy that awaits the righteous'.

'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.' Also, 'In My Father's house are

many mansions'. These were particularly pleasing passages to him, and often referred to in our scriptural conversations.

[1] The Shi'ahs only wipe or rub the feet, instead of washing them, as do the Sunnis. In the standing posture (*qiyam*) in prayer, the Sunnis place the right hand over the left below the navel; the Shi'ahs keep their hands hanging on both sides of the body.

[2] I have met with the creed of the modern Jews, some time in the course of my life, in Hurd's *History of all Religions*; the belief of the Mussulmauns, as regards the unity of God, strictly coincides with that of the Jews, described in the first four articles of their creed. [*Author*.]

[3] *Namaz*, liturgical prayer, as contrasted with *du'a*, ordinary prayer.

[4] *Ramzan, Ramazan*.

[5] *Hajj*.

[6] *Zakat*.

[7] Khalifah, 'successor,' 'lieutenant,' 'viceregent.'

[8] 'Umar, Abu Bakr, 'Usman.

[9] No son named Ishmail is recorded. Ibrahim, his son from his slave girl, Mary the Copt, died A.D. 631, and was buried at Medina. The daughter of Abu Bakr was 'Ayishah.

[10] The Prophet married Hafsah, daughter of 'Umar, as his third wife.

[11] Khadijah.

[12] 'Whoso is the enemy of Gabriel—for he has by God's leave caused to descend on thy heart the confirmation of previous revelations.'—*Koran*, ii. 91.

[13] 'The story of the destruction of the library at Alexandria is first told by Bar-hebraeus (Abulfaragius), a Christian writer who lived six centuries later: it is of very doubtful authority.'—*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, i. 570.

[14] This is incorrect, Sunnis very largely preponderating over Shi'ahs. According to the latest information there were in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, nearly 6-1/2 million Sunnis and 183,000 Shi'ahs (*Imperial Gazetteer* (1908), xxiv. 172). This information was not collected in recent census reports. In the whole of India, in 1881, there were 46-3/4 million Sunnis, as compared with 809,561 Shi'ahs.

[15] The correct list of the Imams recognized by the Imamiya or orthodox Shi'ahs is as follows: 'Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet; Al-Hasan, son of 'Ali, Al-Husain, second son of

'Ali; 'Ali Zain-ul-'Abidin, son of Al-Husain; Muhammad Al-Baqir, son of Zain-ul-'Abidin; Ja'afar as-Sadiq, son of Muhammad Al-Baqir; Ar-Raza, son of Musa; Muhammad At-Taqi, son of Ar-Raza; 'Ali-an Naqi, son of Muhammad At-Taqi; Al-Hasan Al-Askari, son of 'Ali-an Naqi; Muhammad, son of Al-Hasan Al-Askari, or the Imam Al-Mahdi, who is believed to be still alive, and will appear in the last days as the Mahdi.

[16] *Kafn*, properly 'a winding-sheet'.

[17] *Qanat*.

[18] The religious man generally prepares his own winding-sheet, keeping it always ready, and occasionally taking out this monitor to add another verse or chapter, as the train of thought may have urged at the time. I have seen this done by the Meer Hadjee Shaah, who appropriated a piece of fine white cambric muslin, he had received from me, to this sacred purpose. I have often been a silent observer of my revered friend whilst he was engaged in writing passages from the book whose rules he lived by. The anticipated moment when he should require this his kuffin dress, was never clouded by dread, but always looked forward to with cheerfulness and fervent hope; for he trusted in the mercy of God whom he loved and worshipped. [*Author*.] [Many pilgrims buy at Mecca the shroud in which they desire to be buried, and wash it in the well Zamzam, supposing that the holy water will secure the repose of the soul after death.]

[19] Maccurrub means those angels who are at all times privileged to appear in the presence of God;—they are supposed to have eyes of great brilliance. In order that the Mussulmauns may have the reply ready for that awful moment, they have a custom of repeating the responses to the angel every evening, when the lamp is first lighted, as they say this sudden light resembles the angels' eyes. I had noticed the custom for some time, and fancied the Mussulmaun people worshipped light, until I was made acquainted with the real motive for this general observance both with the men and women. [*Author.*] [*Muqarrab*, 'those allowed to come near'.]

[20] Kiblaah is the holy place to which men turn their face when offering up their prayer to God, as the Jews face Jerusalem. Literally, 'worshipping place'. [*Author.*] [*Qiblah*: the direction of prayer was changed by the Prophet from Jerusalem to Mecca (*Koran*, ii. 138-9, with Sale's note).]

[21] See p. 72.

[22] Munkir, or Munkar, and Nakir are the two recording angels.

[23] See p. 78.

[24] *Du'a*.

[25] Al-Mahdi, 'the directed one', who will appear in the last day. According to the Shi'ahs, he has already appeared in the person of Muhammad Abu'l-Qasim, the 12th Imam. Later claimants are Sayyid Ahmad, who fought against the Sikhs in 1826; Muhammad Ahmad ibn Sayyid Abdulla, who fled after the fatal day of Omdurman, and was killed in battle in 1899.

[26] *Hayat[u']l-Qulub* compiled by Muhammad Baqir, whose last work was published A.D. 1627. It has been partly translated into English by J.L. Morrick, Boston, 1850.

[27] Sirat, the bridge over which the soul must cross on its way to Paradise.

[28] Mizan, the Balance, with which the deeds of the dead man are weighed.—*Koran*, xxi. 47.

[29] May not this be a poetical symbol, similar to the scythe? [*Author.*]

[30] Baqarah 'Id, 'cow festival,' held on the 10th of the month Zu'l-Hijjah, the month of pilgrimage, the attempted sacrifice of Ishmael having, it is said, occurred at Mount Mina, near Mecca.

[31] Kiramu'l-Katibin, one recording the good, the other the evil actions of the dead.

[32] Harun-al-Rashid, 'Aaron the Orthodox', fifth Abbasid Caliph, of Baghdad (A.D. 763 or 776-809), best known from *The Arabian Nights*.

[33] *Beti*.

LETTER VII

Namaaz (daily prayer).—The Mussulmaun prayers.—Their different names and times.—Extra prayer-service.—The Mosque.—Ablutions requisite previous to devotion.—Prostrations at prayers.—Mosque described.—The Mussulmauns' Sabbath.—Its partial observance.—The amusements of this life not discontinued on the Sabbath.—Employment of domestics undiminished on this day.—Works of importance then commenced.—Reasons for appropriating Friday to the Sabbath.—The Jews opposed to Mahumud.—The Prophet receives instructions from the angel Gabriel.—Their import and definition. Remarks of a Commentator on the Khoraun.—Prayer of intercession.—Pious observance of Christmas Day by a Native Lady.—Opinions entertained of our Saviour.—Additional motives for prayer.—David's Mother's prayer.—Anecdote of Moses and a Woodcutter.—Remarks upon the piety and devotion of the female Mussulmauns.

The Mussulmaun Lawgiver commanded Namaaz (daily prayer) five times a day:

1st. 'The Soobhoo Namaaz,' to commence at the dawn of day.

2nd. 'The Zohur,' at the second watch of the day, or mid-day.

3rd. 'The Ausur,' at the third day watch.

4th. 'The Muggrib,' at sunset; and,

5th. 'The Eshaa,' at the fourth ghurrie of the night.[1]

These are the commanded hours for prayer. Mahumud himself observed an additional service very strictly, at the third watch of the night, which was called by him, 'Tahujjoot,'[2] and the most devout men, in all ages of their faith, have imitated this example scrupulously.

'The Soobhoo Namaaz' is deemed a necessary duty, and commences with the earliest dawn of day. The several prayers and prostrations occupy the greatest part of an hour, with those who are devout in their religious exercises; many extend the service by readings from an excellent collection, very similar to our Psalms, called 'The Vazefah'.[3]

'The Zohur Namaaz', an equally essential duty, commences at mid-day, and occupies about the same time as 'The Soobhoo'.

'The Ausur Namaaz' commences at the third day watch. The religious men are not tempted to excuse themselves from the due observance of this hour; but the mere people of the world, or those whose business requires their time, attach this service to the next, and satisfy their conscience with thinking that the prayer-hours combined, answers the same purpose as when separately performed.

'The Muggrib Namaaz'. This is rigidly observed at sunset; even those who cannot make it convenient at other hours, will leave their most urgent employment to perform this duty at sunset. Who that has lived any time in India, cannot call to mind the interesting sight of the labouring classes, returning to their home after the business of the day is over? The sun sinking below the Western horizon, the poor man unbinds his waist, and spreads his cummerbund on the side of the road; he performs his ablutions from his brass lota of water, and facing Mecca, bows himself down under the canopy of heaven, to fulfil what he believes to be his duty at that hour to his merciful God.

'The Eshaa Namaaz' commences at the fourth ghurrie of the night. The form of prayer for this Namaaz is much longer than the rest. The devout men extend their prayers at this still hour of the night; they tell me that they feel more disposed at this time to pour out their hearts to God in praise and thanksgiving, than at any other period of the day or night; and I have known many of them to be at silent prayer for hours together.

Many persons in their early life may have neglected that due obedience expected in the commanded daily prayers; in after life, they endeavour to make up the deficiency, by imposing on themselves extra services, to fulfil the number omitted. By the same rule, when a member of the family dies, and it is suspected the due performance of Namaaz had been neglected by him, the survivor, who loved him or her in life, is anxious for the soul's rest, and thus proves it by performing additional prayers for the benefit of the soul of that beloved individual.

If a Mussulmaun falls from affluence to penury, twelve devout men of his faith engage to fast and pray, on a day fixed by themselves, to make intercession for their friend:—they believe in the efficacy of good men's prayers; and Meer Hadjee Shaah has often declared to me, that he has witnessed the benefit of this exercise by the happiest results, in many such cases.

The Khoraun, it is commanded, shall be read. A person perhaps dies before he has been awakened to a love of sacred things; his friends therefore engage readers to attend his grave, and there to read the Khoraun for the benefit of the departed soul.[4]

They have a firm belief in the efficacy of prayer by proxy; and the view they have of departed spirits is still more singular. They believe the soul hovers over the body in the grave for some time, and that the body is so far animated, as to be sensible of what is passing; as when the Maulvee is repeating the service, the angels visit in the grave, or when the Khoraun is read; hence the belief in the efficacy of prayer and reading as substitutes for neglected or omitted duties whilst on earth. There are in all the mosques men retained to do the requisite service there,[5] that is, to keep it clean, and to prevent any thing that could pollute the sanctuary from entering; to call at the stated hours for Namaaz, with a loud voice, so that all the neighbourhood may hear and go to prayers; he mounts the minaret as the hour is striking, and pronounces, 'Allah wo uckbaar!' 'Mahumudoon Russool Allah!'[6]—God alone is true! Mahumud is God's Prophet!—with a voice, the extent of which can only be imagined by those who have heard it; this summons is repeated many times over.

The mosque is open day and night for all who choose to enter for the purpose of prayer. The Mussulmauns, however, in their prayer-services are not restricted to the mosques; all places are deemed holy where no unclean animal has been to defile the spot, as dogs or swine, nor any idol been set up for worship. The person coming to Namaaz must not have contaminated himself by touching the dead, or any other thing accounted unclean, until he has bathed his whole body and changed his clothes. This resembles the Mosaic law.

Ablutions are regarded as essentially necessary: if any one is ill, and to use water would be dangerous, or if there be no water to be found where the Mussulmaun is about to pray, there is an allowed substitute, merely to rub the hands, feet, knees, and head with the dry dust of clay, and this is counted to them for ablutions. Thus prepared, the devotee spreads his prayer-carpet[7] (generally of fine matting) in the most convenient place to himself, if not in the mosque;—perhaps under a tree, in the verandah, or in a room, no matter where,

taking care, under all circumstances, that the carpet is spread to face the Kaabah (Holy House at Mecca).

At the commencement of his prayers, he stands erect, his hands lifted up, the palms held out towards heaven, where the eyes are also turned whilst expressing adoration and praise to God. This ended, he prostrates himself before the Almighty, his forehead touching the ground; the form of words here used expresses the unworthiness of the creature permitted to approach and worship the Creator; again he stands to repeat the glorious perfections of God; he then kneels in worship and prayer, after which prostrations are resumed, &c. In the performance of some of the services they prostrate five times, standing up and kneeling an equal number of times; the shortest services have three, and all the prayers and praises are arranged in Arabic,—that most expressive language,—which to translate, they say, is to corrupt the meaning of the prayers. For this reason the Khoraun is not allowed in any other than the original language; and for the benefit of the unlearned in Arabic, it is commented upon, passage by passage, in the Persian language.

The mosques are all erected on one plan; the entrance to the outer court is secured by a gate or door always on the latch, without locks, bars, or bolts; in the paved yard a tank or reservoir for bathing or ablutions is usually provided. The mosque itself is square, with a dome and two minarets; the side next the court-yard is the entrance, and generally this front is entirely open; the back of the mosque faces Mecca, in which direction the prayer must be offered to be effectual. These houses of prayer are generally kept clean and neat, but not the slightest ornament allowed within the walls; the floor is matted, and a plain wooden mhembur (pulpit) is provided. Shoes never enter within the precincts of the mosque; 'Put off thy shoes' is strictly observed by Mussulmauns in all sacred places—a man praying with shoes on his feet would be accounted mad or a heathen.[8]

The Sabbath of the Mussulmauns is kept on Friday, commencing on the preceding night, after the manner of the Jews, only with the difference of the day.[9]

As a religious rest, the Sabbath is but partially observed with Mussulmauns. The Soonies, I have remarked, pay much more attention to its institutions than the Sheahs; but with either sect, the day is less strictly kept, than might have been expected from people who really seem to make religion their study, and the great business of their lives. Both sects have extra prayers for the day besides the usual Namaaz, which, the religious people perform with, great punctuality, whether they carry their devotions to the mosque, or offer their prayers in due form in their own abode. On the Sabbath they make it a point to bathe and change their apparel; the public offices are closed, and the shops partially shut until mid-day; the rulers,—as Kings or Nuwaubs,—distinguish the day by not receiving their courtiers and the public visitors, as on other days. Charitable donations are likewise more bountifully dispensed from the rich to the poor on Friday.

These observances serve to convince us that they believe in the constituted Sabbath; still there is not that strict respect for the holy day which could satisfy the scrupulous feelings of a Christian; the servants are quite as much employed on Friday as on any other day;—the dhurzie[10] (tailor), dhobhie[11] (washerman), and indeed the whole establishment of

servants and slaves, male and female, find their work undiminished on the Sabbath. The ladies amuse themselves with cards or dice, the singing women even are quite as much in request as on other days; and all the amusements of life are indulged in without once seeming to suspect that they are disobeying the law of God, or infringing on their actual duties. Indeed, I believe they would keep the day strictly, if they thought doing so was a necessary duty: but I have often observed, that as Friday is one of their 'fortunate days', works of any importance are commenced on this day;—whether it be building a house,—planting a garden or field,—writing a book,—negotiating a marriage,—going a journey,—making a garment, or any other business of this life which they wish should prosper. With them, therefore, the day of rest is made one of the busiest in the calendar; but I must do them the justice to say, that they believe their hearts are more pure after the ablutions and prayers have been performed. And that as nothing, however trifling or important, according to their praiseworthy ideas, should ever be commenced without being first dedicated to God,—from whose mercy they implore aid and blessings on the labour of their hands,—they set apart Friday for commencing whatever business they are anxious should prosper. This was the excuse made by the pious Meer Hadjee Shaah.

Mahumud's biographers notice in many instances the strict observance of the Sabbath, at the period in which he flourished; they also say he selected Friday to be observed as the Mussulmaun Sabbath in distinction from the Jews, who it would seem were jealous of Mahumud's teaching, and annoyed both him and his followers in every way they could possibly devise. And the Khoraun commentators, on the subject of Mahumud's mission, declare, when speaking of the place to which the Mussulmaun bow in prayer, 'That when Mahumud first commenced his task of teaching the ignorant Arabians to forsake their idol worship, and to turn to the only true God, he was often reviled and insulted by the Jews; who even ridiculed the presumption of the Mussulmauns in daring to bow down, in their worship, towards Jerusalem, in the same direction with them. Mahumud was sadly perplexed whether to abstain or continue the practice, as he was unwilling to offend the Jews: in this trial he was visited by the angel Gabriel, who brought the following command to him from God:—

'Turn from Jerusalem; and when thou bowest down to Me, face that Holy House of Abraham, the place of sacrifice: that shall be thy Kiblaah, O Mahumud.'

Kiblaah is the point to which men bow in worship.[12] Kaabah is the 'Holy House' where Abraham's sacrifice was offered. Mecca is the city or tract of country surrounding the house.

Thus they will say: 'I am making my pilgrimage to Mecca, to visit the Kaabah, which in my Namaaz, has been my Kiblaah when worshipping my God.'

A Commentator on the Khoraun writes, in allusion to the prevailing worldly-minded men of his day, the following expressive definition of the objects most worshipped by them, and concludes with the one only Kiblaah deserving men's attention.

'The Sovereign's Kiblaah is His well-ornamented crown.'

'The Sensualist's Kiblaah, The gratification of his appetites.'

'The Lover's Kiblaah, The mistress of his heart.'

'The Miser's Kiblaah, His hoards of gold and silver.'

'The Ambitious Man's Kiblaah, This world's honours and possessions.'

'The mere Professor's Kiblaah, The arch of the Holy House.'

And

'The Righteous Man's Kiblaah, The pure love of God,—which may all men learn and practise.'

The Mussulmaun Faith directs them to believe, not only in the prophets and their writings, but also that they are intercessors at the throne of grace; for this reason Mahumud taught his followers to call on God to hear them for the sake of,—

'1st. Adam, Suffee Ali ("the Pure" is the nearest possible translation).'

'2nd. Noah, the Prophet of God.'

'3rd. Abraham, the Friend of God.'

'4th. Moses, who Conversed with God.'

'5th. Jesus, the Soul of God.'

'6th. Mahumud, the Prophet of God.'[13]

Those persons who are devout in the exercise of their religious duties day by day, in the concluding part of the morning Namaaz strictly observe the practice of Mahumud and the Emaums, in the prayers of intercession; and the 'Salaam-oon-ali Khoom',[14] (peace or rest be with thee) O Adam Suffee Ali! and to thee, O Noah, the Prophet of God! and to thee, O Abraham! &c. &c. going through the line in the manner and rotation above-described, concluding with the several Emaums, twelve in number (as in their Creed).

It will be seen by this, that they have reverence for all who came from God, to teach mankind His will. They believe also, that the Holy Prophets are sensible of the respect paid to them by existing mortals, as also when on earth they knew what was in the hearts of those men they conversed with. I have the honour to be acquainted with a lady of the Mussulmaun Religion, who lives in accordance with the Faith she professes. There was a period in her life, within my recollection, when she had very severe trials of a domestic

nature. She trusted in God for relief, and followed in the way she had been instructed, keeping fasts and holy days; testifying her respect for the prophets, by observing those days for extra prayer and giving alms, which the Khoraun and commentaries represent as worthy to be done, by the devout Mussulmauns.

Amongst the number of days strictly observed by this pious lady during her troubles, was the Nativity of Jesus Christ, for whose sake she fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and gave alms to the necessitous. I was the more delighted when first hearing of this circumstance, because I had judged of the Mussulmaun faith by common report, and fancied they rejected, with the Jews, our Redeemer having come. They, on the contrary, believe, according to their Prophet's words, 'that He was born of the Virgin Mary; that He worked miracles; that He ascended after His earthly commission had ceased, to the seventh heaven; that He will again visit the earth (when their Emaum Mhidhie will also appear), to cleanse the world of its corrupt wickedness, when all men shall live in peace, and but one faith shall prevail, in the worship of the true God'.

The Mussulmaun work, 'Hyaatool Kaloob' (which I have so often referred to), contains, with the lives of all the prophets, the Life of Jesus Christ, His acts, and the Ungeel[15] (Gospel). The Gospel they have is in many things different from ours; it is not formed into books by the apostles, neither are the miracles united with the Gospel, but are detailed as the acts of Christ Jesus. What they understand by the Ungeel, is, 'the Word of God by the mouth of Jesus';—for instance, the Sermon on the Mount, or, in other words, the precepts of Jesus. I am indebted to the Meer for this information.

The Mussulmauns say, 'All power belongs to God.—Who would dare dispute the miracle of Christ's birth? Is there any thing difficult with God? God first formed Adam from the dust; and by His word all things were created. Is there any thing too great for His power? Let no man, then, dispute the birth of Christ by a pure Virgin.' They believe that Jesus Christ was the Prophet of God, but they believe not that He is God; and they deem all who thus declare Christ to be God, as unfaithful both to God and to Christ.

I have said the Mussulmauns of each sect have extra prayers, beside the Namaaz, or daily services of prayer. I suppose there are a greater variety of prayers amongst these people than with those of any other religion. Very few, if any, of the devout men, in the early ages of their religion, have omitted to leave behind them some testimony of their regard for posterity in the form of 'prayers', dictating the words most likely to lead the heart of the creature to the worship of the Creator; and also directions how to pray for any particular object they may desire to accomplish by the aid of God, in whom they are instructed and believe the fulness of power, as of glory, ever was, is, and will be to all eternity.

If the Mussulmaun suffers by persecution, by sickness, by loss of property, or any other distress of mind or body, he applies himself to the particular prayer of a favourite Emaum, or holy scribe, suited to his exact case. I cannot do better here than copy the translation my husband has made of the leading causes for the use of that prayer called 'Daaood's[16] (David's) Mother's Prayer', in which I have known so many people to be

engaged, when under difficulties, at the appointed period, viz. the fifteenth day of the month Rujub. The prayer itself occupies about sixteen closely written pages, and the person intending to make use of it, is expected to bathe and fast, as commanded by Mahumud, who instructed his followers in this prayer, which was then called 'The Opening of Difficulties',[17] afterwards, and to the present day 'David's Mother's Prayer', by reason of a miraculous occurrence which followed her having fulfilled the task of fasting, preparation, and the prayer alluded to.

'A very poor woman had been engaged in the family of the Emaum Jaffur Saadick,[18] as wet-nurse to his son; she was much respected in the family, who wished to have retained her with them, when the child was weaned; but she would return to her own village, where her son was living, at some distance from the city of Koofah.

'Her son, named Daaood, grew up under her maternal care, and proved the great comfort and solace of her life, by his dutiful and affectionate bearing towards her. At that period the reigning King of Arabia was a most cruel man, and an idolater; he persecuted all the professors of the "True Faith" whenever they came within his reach, with the most barbarous brutality.

'One day, at an early hour, Daaood's mother presented herself at the house of the Emaum, in great distress of mind, and related the heavy affliction which had befallen her, in the loss of her dearly loved son (then a fine youth), who had been decoyed by the wicked emissaries of the King, for the purpose, it was feared, of immolation—as it was known to be his custom, when, laying the foundation of a building, to deposit living victims of the Mussulmaun faith beneath it. The poor woman had no hope her eyes would ever again be blessed with the sight of her fondly-loved son, and still more agonizing were her fears, that his protracted sufferings would be of the same terrible description with numbers of the faithful who had fallen into the hands of that wretched heathen King.

'Her friends in the Emaum's family grieved over the sad affliction with which their favourite had been visited. The Emaum strove to comfort her, and proposed that she should perform the prayer in which Mahumud had instructed his followers for "The Opening of Difficulties". "Alas!" replied the woman, "poor ignorant that I am, how shall I repeat that prayer; I cannot read: knowest thou not, my Emaum, that I am not acquainted with letters?" "But I will teach you the prayer," answered the Emaum; "you shall repeat it after me, and by diligence you will acquire it perfectly by that day, on which our Prophet commanded his followers to perform the fast and offer this prayer, that God might be pleased to remove their calamities."

'The poor woman obeyed all the injunctions and advice of the Emaum Jaffur Saadick punctually; acquired, by her diligence, the words of the prayer; strictly observed the preparation by fast; and, on the fifteenth "day of Rujub", the prayer was duly performed, with sincere devotion and perfect faith in God's power, and His infinite mercy.

'In the mean time, it appears, the King having been much troubled in a dream, he was warned to release his prisoner from captivity without delay, at the peril of destruction to

himself and all he possessed. The warning dream presented him with a view of the gulf to which he was condemned, if he delayed the release of Daaood from his confinement. The person of the youth was so clearly represented to the King in his dream, that there could be no possible mistake in the particular captive to be freed, out of the many he held in bondage. The King awakening from his troubled sleep, demanded of his attendants where the young man was confined; and learning from the chief officer of his court that Daaood was sent to a distant place, to be the offering buried under the foundation of a house, erecting by his command: the swiftest camels were ordered immediately, to convey messengers with two bags of gold, and the King's mandate, peremptorily ordering the release of the youth, if happily he yet existed; and if the building was proceeding with, the superintendent was cautioned to pull it down with the utmost care and dispatch, so that nothing should be omitted which could be done to preserve that life now so dear to the hopes of the King.

'The messengers reached the place on the third day after Daaood had been immured in the foundation of the building. Small, indeed, were the hopes that the King's desires would be gratified. The builder, however, more humane than his employer, had so raised the work round the person of Daaood, as to leave him unhurt by its pressure, and having left a small aperture for air, his life was preserved;—the masonry being removed promptly, and with caution, the youth was discovered not only alive, but even uninjured by the confinement. The courier mounted the boy on the camel, with the present of gold contained in two bags, and conveyed Daaood, without loss of time, to his mother's abode.

'All the particulars having undergone due investigation, it was clearly proved that it was on that very day when the poor woman was occupied in her fast and prayer, that her son Daaood was released from the foundation of the King's house and restored to his home. From this time forward the prayer of "Opening Difficulties" was denominated "Or of Daaood's Mother".'

Turning over my collection of curiosities for the story of Daaood's Mother, which the Meer translated for me many years since, I met with an ancient anecdote which. I received from the same dear revered friend I must often quote as my author when I am detailing the particulars of things which I have heard and not seen,—Meer Hadjee Shaah,—who tells me he has found the following anecdote in the 'Commentary on The History of Moses'.—It is translated by my husband.

'When Huzerut[19] Moosa (Moses), "to whose spirit be peace!" was on earth, there lived near him a poor yet remarkably religious man, who had for many years supported himself and his wife by the daily occupation of cutting wood for his richer neighbours; four small copper coins (equivalent to our halfpence) proved the reward of his toil, which at best afforded the poor couple but a scanty meal after his day's exertions.

'The prophet Moosa passed the Woodcutter one morning, who accosted him with "O Moosa! Prophet of the Most High; behold I labour each day for my coarse and scanty meal; may it please thee, O Huzerut! to make a petition for me to our gracious God, that He may in His mercy grant me at once the whole supply for my remaining years, so that I

shall enjoy one day of earthly happiness, and then, with my wife, be transferred to the place of eternal rest". Moosa promised and made the required petition; his prayer was answered from Mount Tor, thus:—

'"This man's life is long, O Moses! nevertheless, if he be willing to surrender life when his supply is exhausted, tell him thy prayer is heard, the petition accepted, and the whole amount shall be found beneath his jhaawn namaaz[20] (prayer-carpet) after his early prayers."

'The Woodcutter was satisfied when Moosa told him the result of his petition, and when the first duties of the morning were concluded, he failed not in looking for the promised remittance, where, to his surprise, he found a heap of silver coins. Calling his wife, the Woodcutter told her what he had required of the Lord through his Holy Prophet Moosa; pointing to the result, they both agreed it was very good to enjoy a short life of happiness on earth and depart in peace; although they could not help again and again recurring to the number of years on earth they had thus sacrificed. "We will make as many hearts rejoice as this the Lord's gift will admit," they both agreed, "and thus we shall secure in our future state the blessed abode promised to those who fulfil the commands of God in this, since to-morrow our term of life must close."

'The day was spent in providing and preparing provisions for the meal. The whole sum was expended on the best sorts of food, and the poor made acquainted with the rich treat the Woodcutter and his wife were cooking for their benefit. The food was cooked for the indigent, and allotments made to each hungry applicant, reserving for themselves one good substantial meal, to be eaten only when the poor were all served and satisfied. It happened at the very moment they were seated to enjoy this their last meal, as they believed, a voice was heard, "O friend! I have heard of your feast,—I am late, yet may it be that you have a little to spare, for I am hungry to my very heart. The blessing of God be on him who relieves my present sufferings from hunger!" The Woodcutter and his wife agreed that it would be much, better for them to go to heaven with half a bellyful, than leave one fellow-creature on earth famishing for a meal; they, therefore, determined on sharing their own portion with him who had none, and he went away from them rejoicing. "Now," said the happy pair, "we shall eat our half-share with unmixed delight, and with thankful hearts. By to-morrow eve we shall be transferred to paradise."

'They had scarcely raised the savoury food to their opening mouths, when a voice of melancholy bewailing arrested their attention, and stayed the hands already charged with food;—a poor wretched creature, who had not tasted food for two whole days, moaned his piteous tale in accents that drew tears from the Woodcutter and his wife—their eyes met and the sympathy was mutual; they were more willing to depart for heaven without the promised benefit of one earthly enjoyment, than suffer the hungry creature to die from want of that meal they had before them. The dish was promptly tendered to the bewailing subject, and the Woodcutter and his wife consoled each other by thinking that, as their time of departure was now so near at hand, the temporary enjoyment of a meal was not worth one moment's consideration. "To-morrow we die, then of what consequence to us whether we depart with full or empty stomachs!" And now their

thoughts were set on the place of eternal rest. They slept, and arose to their morning orisons with hearts resting humbly on their God, in the fullest expectation that this was their last day on earth: the prayer was concluded, and the Woodcutter in the act of rolling up his carpet, on which he had bowed with gratitude, reverence, and love to his Creator, when he perceived a fresh heap of silver on the floor;—he could scarcely believe it was not a dream. "How wonderful art Thou, O God!" cried the poor Woodcutter; "this is Thy bounteous gift that I may indeed enjoy one day before I quit this earth." And when Moosa came to him, he (Moosa) was satisfied with the goodness and power of God; but he retired again to the Mount to inquire of God the cause of the Woodcutter's respite. The reply given to Moosa was, "That man has faithfully applied the wealth given in answer to his petition. He is worthy to live out his numbered years on earth, who, receiving My bounty, thought not of his own enjoyments whilst his fellow men had wants he could supply." And to the end of the Woodcutter's long life, God's bounty lessened not in substance; neither did the pious man relax in his charitable duties of sharing with the indigent all that he had, and with the same disregard to his own enjoyments.'

I have but little to add, as regards the manner of worship amongst my Mussulmaun acquaintance; but here I cannot omit remarking, that the women are devout in their prayers and strict in their observance of ordinances. That they are not more generally educated is much to be regretted; this, however, is their misfortune, not their fault. The Mussulmaun faith does not exclude the females from a participation in the Eternal world,[21]—as has so often been assorted by people who could not have known them,—and the good Mussulmaun proves it by his instruction of the females under his control in the doctrines of Mahumud, and who he believes to be as much dependent on him for guidance on the road to heaven, as for personal protection from want or worldly dangers.

The pure life of Fatima, Mahumud's only daughter, is greatly esteemed as an example of female excellence, whom they strive to imitate as much as possible, as well in religious as in moral or domestic duties. They are zealous to fulfil all the ordinances of their particular faith,—and I have had the best possible opportunity of studying their character,—devotion to God being the foundation on which every principal action of their lives seems to rest.

In my delineation of character, whether male or female, I must not be supposed to mean the whole mass of the Mussulmaun population. There are good and bad of every class or profession of people; it has been my good fortune to be an inmate with the pious of that faith, and from their practice I have been aided in acquiring a knowledge of what constitutes a true disciple of Mahumud.

[1] The writer mixes up the Persian and Arabic names of the hours of prayer. The proper names, according to this list, are: i, Namaz-i-Subh, from dawn to sunrise; ii, Salatu'l-Zuhr, when the sun has begun to decline; iii, Salatu'l 'Asr, midway between Nos. ii and iv; iv, Sala tu'l-Maghrib, a few minutes after sunset; v, Salatu'l 'Isha, when night has closed in.

[2] *Namaz-i-Tahajjid*, the prayer after midnight.

[3] *Wazifah*, 'a daily ration of food', a term used for the daily lesson or portion of the *Koran* read by devout Musalmans. The *Koran* is divided into thirty lessons (*siparah*) for use during the month Ramazan.

[4] Special readers (*muqri*) of the *Koran* are needed, owing to the want of vowels in the Arabic character (Sale, *Preliminary Discourse*, 47). Readers are often employed to recite the *Koran* over a corpse on the way to Karbala.

[5] Known as Khadim.

[6] *Allahu akbar … Muhammadan rasulu'llah.* In English the entire call runs: 'Allah is most great (four times), I testify that there is no God but Allah (twice), I testify that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah (twice), Come to prayer (twice), Come to salvation (twice), Allah is most great (twice), There is no God but Allah!'

[7] Known as *Ja'e-namaz*, 'place of prayer'.

[8] See p. 27.

[9] The *Salatu'l-Juma'*, the Friday prayer, is obligatory. Friday was appointed a Sabbath to distinguish Musalmans from Jews and Christians.

[10] *Darzi*.

[11] *Dhobi*.

[12] See p. 74.

[13] The correct titles are as follows: Adam, *Safiyu'llah*, 'The Chosen One of God'; Noah, *Nabiyu'llah*, 'The Prophet of God'; Abraham, *Khalilu'llah*, 'The Friend of God'; Moses, *Kalimu'llah*, 'He that spoke with God'; Jesus, *Ruhu'llah*, 'A Spirit from God'; Muhammad, *Rasulu 'Illah*, 'The Prophet of God'.

[14] *Salam-'alai-kum.*

[15] *Injil, [Greek: e'uaggélion]*, the Gospel, as opposed to *taurat*, the Pentateuch.

[16] Daud.

[17] The Fatiha, or opening chapter of the *Koran*, used like the Pator-noster.

[18] Ja'afar as-Sadiq.

[19] *Hazrat*, 'Reverend', or 'Superior'.

[20] *Ja'e-namaz*, known also as *sajjadah*, or *musalla*.

[21] The assertion that the Koran teaches that women have no souls is incorrect. See the texts collected by Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 677 ff.

LETTER VIII

The Fast of Rumzaun.—Motives for its strict observance.—Its commencement and duration.—Sentiments of Meer Hadjee Shaah on the duty of fasting.—Adherence of the females to the observing this fast.—How first broken.—Devout persons extend the term to forty days.—Children permitted to try their zeal.—Calamitous effects of the experiment.—Exemptions from this duty.—Joyful termination of the fast.—Celebration of Eade on the last day.—The Nuzza.—Nautchwomen and Domenie.—Surprise of the Natives at European dancing.—Remarks on their Music.—Anecdotes of Fatima.—The Chuckee.

'The poor man fasts, because he wanteth meat;
The sick man fasts, because he cannot eat.
The miser fasts, with greedy mind, to spare;
The glutton fasts, to eat a greater share.
The hypocrite, he fasts to seem more holy;
The righteous man, to punish sinful folly.'

The secret motive of the heart, man cannot fathom in his neighbour's deeds. There are some actions so praiseworthy in themselves, that the charitably disposed will pass over the probable actuating motive, when looking only to the fair example. I have, however, reason to think that the Mussulmauns generally, in fulfilling the commanded fast of Rumzaun, have an unexceptionable motive. They are taught by their Lawgiver, that the due performance of this rigid fast is an acceptable service to God the Creator, from man the creature: they believe this, and therefore they fast?

Amongst the well-informed it is persevered in as a duty delightful to be permitted to perform; the ignorant take some merit to themselves in having faithfully observed the command; yet all the fasting population are actuated more or less by the same motive,—-the desire to please God by fulfilling His commands, delivered to them by their acknowledged Prophet.

The severity of a Mussulmaun's fast can alone be understood by those who have made the trial, as I frequently have, of the strict rules of abstinence which they observe; and with

the additional privations to be endured at the period of the hottest months and the longest days in the same climate, as will sometimes be the case with all their movable fasts.

The Mussulmaun fast commences when the first streak of light borders the Eastern horizon, and continues until the stars are clearly discerned in the heavens. During this period not the slightest particle of food, not one single drop of water, or any other liquid, passes the lips; the hookha, even, is disallowed during the continuance of the fast, which of itself forms not only a luxury of great value, but an excellent antidote to hunger.

Amongst the really religious Mussulmauns the day is passed in occasional prayer, besides the usual Namaaz, reading the Khoraun, or the Lives of the Prophets. I have witnessed some, in their happy employment of these fatiguing days, who evinced even greater animation in their conversation than at other times; towards the decline of a day, when the thermometer has stood at eighty-nine in the shade of a closed house, they have looked a little anxious for the stars appearing, but,—to their credit be it told,—without the slightest symptom of impatience or fretfulness at the tardy approach of evening.

My revered friend, Meer Hadjee Shaah, always told me that the great secret of a fast, to be beneficial, was to employ time well, which benefited both soul and body; employment suited to the object of the fast being the best possible alleviation to the fatigue of fasting. He adds, if the temper be soured either by the abstinence or the petty ills of life, the good effects of the fast are gone with the ruffled spirit, and that the person thus disturbed had much better break his fast, since it ceases to be of any value in the sight of Him to whom the service is dedicated; the institution of the fast having for its object to render men more humble, more obedient to their God; all dissensions must be forgotten; all vicious pursuits abandoned, to render the service of a fast an acceptable offering to God.

In the zeenahnah, the females fast with zealous rigidness; and those who have not the happiness to possess a knowledge of books, or a husband or father disposed to read to them, will still find the benefit of employment in their gold embroidery of bags and trimmings, or other ornamental needle-work; some will listen to the Khaaunie[1] (tales), related by their attendants; others will overlook, and even assist in the preparations going forward for opening the fast. Ladies of the first quality do not think it a degradation to assist in the cooking of choice dishes. It is one of the highest favours a lady can confer on her friends, when she sends a tray of delicate viands cooked by her own hands. So that with the prayers, usual and occasional, the daily nap of two hours, indulged in throughout the year, occupation is made to fill up the day between dawn and evening; and they bear the fatigue with praiseworthy fortitude. Those who are acquainted with letters, or can afford to maintain hired readers, pass this month of trials in the happiest manner.

The fast is first broken by a cooling draught called tundhie[2]; the same draught is usually resorted to in attacks of fever. The tundhie is composed of the seeds of lettuce, cucumber, and melon, with coriander, all well pounded and diluted with cold water, and then strained through muslin, to which is added rose-water, sugar, syrup of pomegranate, and kurah[3] (a pleasant-flavoured distilled water from the blossom of a species of aloe). This cooling draught is drank by basins' full amongst the Rozedhaars[4] (fasters), and it is

generally prepared in the zeenahnah apartments for the whole establishment, male and female. Some of the aged and more delicate people break their fast with the juice of spinach[5] only, others choose a cup of boiling water to sip from. My aged friend, Meer Hadjee Shaah, has acquired a taste for tea, by partaking of it so often with me; and with this he has broken his fast for several years, as he says, with the most comforting sensations to himself. I have seen some people take a small quantity of salt in the first instance, preparatory to a draught of any kind of liquid. Without some such prelude to a meal, after the day's fast, the most serious consequences are to be apprehended.

After indulging freely in the simple liquids, and deriving great benefit and comfort from a hookha, the appetite for food is generally stayed for some time: many persons prefer a rest of two hours before they can conveniently touch the food prepared for them, and even then, seldom eat in the same proportion as they do at other meals. Many suffice themselves with the one meal, and indulge in that very sparingly. The servants and labouring classes, however, find a second meal urgently necessary, which they are careful to take before the dawning day advances. In most families, cold rice-milk is eaten at that early hour. Meer Hadjee Shaah, I have before noticed, found tea to be the best antidote to extreme thirst, and many are the times I have had the honour to present him with this beverage at the third watch of the night, which he could enjoy without fear of the first streaks of light on the horizon arriving before he had benefited by this luxury.

The good things provided for dinner after the fast are (according to the means of the party) of the best, and in all varieties; and from the abundance prepared, a looker-on would pronounce a feast at hand; and so it is, if to feed the hungry be a feast to the liberal-hearted bestower, which with these people I have found to be a part and parcel of their nature. They are instructed from their infancy to know all men as brothers who are in any strait for food; and they are taught by the same code, that for every gift of charity they dispense with a free good will, they shall have the blessing and favour of their Creator abundantly in return. On the present occasion, they cook choice viands to be distributed to the poor, their fellow-labourers in the harvest; and in proportion to the number fed, so are their expectations of blessings from the great Giver of all good, in whose service it is performed. In my postscript you will find several anecdotes of the daughter of Mahumud on the subject of charity.

When any one is prevented fulfilling the fast of Rumzaun in his own person he is instructed to consider himself bound to provide food for opening the fast of a certain number of poor men who are Rozedhaars. The general food of the peasantry and lower orders of the people—bread and dhall[6]—is deemed sufficient, if unable to afford anything better.

When any one dies without having duly observed the fast, pious relatives engage some devout person to perform a month's fast, which they believe will be accepted for the neglectful person. Many devout Mussulmauns extend the fast from thirty to full forty days, by the example of Mahumud and his family; and it is no unusual thing to meet with others who, in addition to this month, fast every Thursday through the year; some very

rigid persons even fast the month preceding and the following month, as well as the month of Rumzaun.

Some very young people (children we should call them in happy England) are permitted to try their fasting powers, perhaps for a day or two during the month of Rumzaun. The first fast of the noviciate is an event of no small moment to the mother, and gives rise to a little festival in the zeenahnah; the females of the family use every sort of encouragement to induce the young zealot to persevere in the trial when once commenced, and many are the preparations for the opening last with due éclat in their circle—sending trays of the young person's good things to intimate friends, in remembrance of the interesting event; and generally with a parade of servants and music, when the child (I must have it so) belongs to the nobility, or persons of consequence, who at the same time distribute money and food to the poor.

These first fasts of the young must be severe trials, particularly in the hot season. I have heard, it is no uncommon thing for the young sufferers to sink under the fatigue, rather than break the fast they have had courage to commence. The consolation to the parents in such a case would be, that their child was the willing sacrifice, and had died 'in the road of God', as all deaths occurring under performances of a known duty are termed.

Within my recollection a distressing calamity of this nature occurred at Lucknow, in a very respectable family. I did not know the party personally, but it was the topic in all the houses I visited at that period. I made a memorandum of the circumstance at the time, from which the following is copied:

'Two children, a son and daughter of respectable parents, the eldest thirteen and the youngest eleven years of age, were permitted to prove their faith by the fast, on one of the days of Rumzaun; the parents, anxious to honour their fidelity, expended a considerable sum of money in the preparations for celebrating the event amongst their circle of friends. Every delicacy was provided for opening their fast, and all sorts of dainties prepared to suit the Epicurean palates of the Asiatics, who when receiving the trays at night would know that this was the testimony of the children's perseverance in that duty they all hold sacred.

'The children bore the trial well throughout the morning, and even until the third watch of the day had passed, their firmness would have reflected credit on people twice their age, making their first fast. After the third watch, the day was oppressively hot, and the children evinced symptoms of weariness and fatigue; they were advised to try and compose themselves to sleep; this lulled them for a short time, but their thirst was more acute when they awoke than before. The mother and her friends endeavoured to divert their attention by amusing stories, praising their perseverance, &c. The poor weak lady was anxious that they should persevere; as the day was now so far gone, she did not like her children to lose the benefit of their fast, nor the credit due to them for their forbearance. The children endeavoured to support with patience the agony that bowed them down—they fainted, and then the mother was almost frantic, blaming herself for having encouraged them to prolong their fast against their strength. Cold water was

thrown over them; attempts were made to force water into their mouths; but, alas! their tender throats were so swollen, that not a drop passed beyond their mouths. They died within a few minutes of each other; and the poor wretched parents were left childless through their own weakness and mistaken zeal. The costly viands destined for the testimony of these children's faith, it may be supposed, were served out to the hungry mendicants as the first offerings dedicated to the now happy spirits of immortality.'

This is a sad picture of the distressing event, but I have not clothed it in the exaggerated garb some versions bore at the time the circumstance happened.

There are some few who are exempt from the actual necessity of fasting during Rumzaun; the sick, the aged, women giving nourishment to infants, and those in expectation of adding to the members of the family, and very young children, these are all commanded not to fast.[7] There is a latitude granted to travellers also; but many a weary pilgrim whose heart is bent heavenward will be found taking his rank amongst the Rozedhaars of the time, without deeming he has any merit in refraining from the privileges his code has conferred upon him; such men will fast whilst their strength permits them to pursue their way.

Towards the last week of Rumzaun the haggard countenances and less cheerful manners of the fasting multitude seem to increase, but they seldom relax unless their health is likely to be much endangered by its continuance.

The conclusion of the month Rumzaun is celebrated as an Eade[8] (festival), and, if not more splendid than any other in the Mussulmaun calendar, it is one of the greatest heart-rejoicing days. It is a sort of thanksgiving day amongst the devout people who have been permitted to accomplish the task; and with the vulgar and ignorant, it is hailed with delight as the season of merriment and good living—a sort of reward for their month's severe abstinence.

The namaaz of the morning, and the prayer for Eade, commence with the dawn; after which the early meal of Eade is looked forward to with some anxiety. In every house the same dainties are provided with great exactness (for they adhere to custom as to a law): plain boiled rice, with dhie[9] (sour curd) and sugar, forms the first morning repast of this Eade; dried dates are eaten with it (in remembrance of the Prophet's family, whose greatest luxury was supposed to be the dates of Arabia).[10] A preparation of flour (similar to our vermicelli)[11] eaten with cold milk and sugar, is amongst the good things of this day, and trifling as it may appear, the indulgence is so great to the native population, that they would consider themselves unfortunate Rozedhaars, if they were not gratified, on this occasion, with these simple emblems of long-used custom. The very same articles are in request in Mussulmaun society, by this custom, from the King to the meanest of his subjects.

The ladies' assemblies, on this Eade, are marked by all the amusements and indulgences they can possibly invent or enjoy, in their secluded state. Some receiving, others paying visits in covered conveyances; all doing honour to the day by wearing their best jewellery

and splendid dresses. The zeenahnah rings with the festive songs and loud music, the cheerful meeting of friends, the distribution of presents to dependants, and remembrances to the poor; all is life and joy, cheerful bustle and amusement, on this happy day of Eade, when the good lady of the mansion sits in state to receive nuzzas from inferiors, and granting proofs of her favour to others.

Nuzza[12] is an offering of money from inferiors to those who rank in society above the person presenting; there is so much of etiquette observed in Native manners, that a first visit to a superior is never made without presenting a nuzza. When we arrived in India, an old servant of my husband's family, named Muckabeg, was sent to meet us at Patna to escort us to Lucknow; on entering our budgerow[13] he presented fourteen rupees to me, which were laid on a folded handkerchief. I did not then understand what was intended, and looked to the Meer for explanation; he told me to accept Muckabeg's 'Nuzza'. I hesitated, remarking that it seemed a great deal more than a man in his situation could afford to give away. My husband silenced my scruples by observing, 'You will learn in good time that these offerings are made to do you honour, together with the certain anticipation of greater benefits in return; Muckabeg tenders this nuzza to you, perhaps it is all the money he possesses, but he feels assured it will be more than doubly repaid to him in the value of a khillaut[14] (dress of honour) he expects from your hands to-day. He would have behaved himself disrespectfully in appearing before you without a nuzza, and had you declined accepting it, he would have thought that you were either displeased with him, or did not approve of his coming.' This little incident will perhaps explain the general nature of all the nuzzas better than any other description I could offer.

Kings and Nuwaubs keep the festival in due form, seated on the throne or musnud, to receive the congratulations and nuzzas of courtiers and dependants, and presenting khillauts to ministers, officers of state, and favourites. The gentlemen manage to pass the day in receiving and paying visits, all in their several grades having some inferiors to honour them in the presentation of offerings, and on whom they can confer favours and benefits; feasting, music, and dancing-women, filling up the measure of their enjoyments without even thinking of wine, or any substitute stronger than such pure liquids as graced the feasts of the first inhabitants of the world.

The Nautchwomen in the apartments of the gentlemen, and the Domenie[15] in the zeenahnahs are in great request on this day of festivity, in every house where the pleasures and the follies of this world are not banished by hearts devoted solely to the service of God. 'The Nautch' has been, so often described that it would here be superfluous to add to the description, feeling as I do an utter dislike both to the amusement and the performers. The nautchunies are entirely excluded from the female apartments of the better sort of people; no respectable Mussulmaun would allow these impudent women to perform before their wives and daughters.

But I must speak of the Domenie, who are the singers and dancers admitted within the pale of zeenahnah life; these, on the contrary, are women of good character, and their songs are of the most chaste description, chiefly in the Hindoostaunie tongue. They are instructed in Native music and play on the instruments in common use with some taste,—

as the saattarah[16] (guitar), with three wire strings; the surringhee[17] (rude-shaped violin); the dhome or dholle[18] (drum), in many varieties, beaten with the fingers, never with sticks. The harmony produced is melancholy and not unpleasing, but at best all who form the several classes of professors in Native societies are indifferent musicians.

Amateur performers are very rare amongst the Mussulmauns; indeed, it is considered indecorous in either sex to practise music, singing, or dancing; and such is the prejudice on their minds against this happy resource amongst genteel people of other climates, that they never can reconcile themselves to the propriety of 'The Sahib Logue',—a term in general use for the English people visiting India,—figuring away in a quadrille or country dance. The nobles and gentlemen are frequently invited to witness a 'station-ball'; they look with surprise at the dancers, and I have often been asked why I did not persuade my countrywomen that they were doing wrong. 'Why do the people fatigue themselves, who can so well afford to hire dancers for their amusement?' Such is the difference between people of opposite views in their modes of pleasing themselves: a Native gentleman would consider himself disgraced or insulted by the simple inquiry, 'Can you dance, sing, or play?'

The female slaves are sometimes taught to sing for their ladies' amusement, and amongst the many Hindoostanie airs there are some that would please even the most scientific ear; although, perhaps, they are as old as the country in which they were invented, since here there are neither composers of modern music, nor competitors for fame to bring the amusement to a science. Prejudice will be a continual barrier to improvement in music with the natives of India; the most homely of their national airs are preferred at the present day to the finest composition of modern Europe.

My promised postscript is a translation from the Persian, extracted from 'The Hyaatool Kaaloob'. The author is detailing the manner of living habitual to Mahumud and his family, and gives the following anecdotes 'hudeeth' [19] (to be relied on), which occurred at the season of Rumzaun; the writer says:—

'It is well known that they (Mahumud's family) were poor in worldly wealth; that they set no other value on temporal riches (which occasionally passed through their hands) but as loans from the great Giver of all good, to be by them distributed amongst the poor, and this was done faithfully; they kept not in their hands the gifts due to the necessitous. The members of Mahumud's family invariably lived on the most simple diet, even when they could have commanded luxuries.

'At one season of Rumzaun,—it was in the lifetime of Mahumud,—Fatima, her husband Ali, and their two sons, Hasan and Hosein, had fasted two days and nights, not having, at that period, the means of procuring the smallest quantity of food to break their fast with. Habitually and from, principle, they disguised from the world or their friends all such temporal trials as it seemed good in the wisdom of Divine Providence to place in their chequered path; preferring under any circumstances of need, to fix their sole trust in the mercy and goodness of God for relief, rather than by seeking aid from their fellow-creatures lessening their dependence on Him.

'On the evening above mentioned, Mahumud went to the cottage of Fatima, and said, "Daughter, I am come to open my fast with thee."—"In the name of the most merciful God, be it so," was the reply of Fatima; yet secretly she sorrowed, that the poverty of her house must now be exposed to her beloved father.

'Fatima spread the dustha-khawn[20] (a large square of calico) on the floor of the room near her father, placed empty plates before him, then retired to her station for prayers; spreading her mat in the direction of Kaabah, she prostrated herself to the earth before God in the humblest attitude, imploring His merciful aid, in this her moment of trial. Fatima's fervent prayer was scarcely finished, when a savoury smell of food attracted her attention; raising her head from the earth, her anxious eye was greeted with the view of a large bowl or basin filled with sulleed[21] (the Arabian food of that period). Fatima again bowed down her head, and poured out in humble strains that gratitude to God with which her heart overflowed. Then rising from her devotions, she took up the savoury food and hurried with it to her father's presence, and summoned her husband and the children to partake of this joyous meal, without even hinting her thoughts that it was the gift of Heaven.

'Ali had been some time seated at the meal, when he, knowing they had no means of procuring it, looked steadily on Fatima, and inquired where she had secreted this delicious food; at the same time recurring to the two days' fast they had endured. "Rebuke her not, my son," said Mahumud; "Fatima is the favoured of Heaven, as was Myriam[22] (Mary), the mother of Esaee[23] (Jesus), who, living in her uncle Zechareah's[24] (Zachariah's) house, was provided by God with the choicest of fruits. Zechareah was poor, and oft he hungered for a meal; but when he entered Myriam's apartment, a fresh supply of rare fruits was wont to greet his eye. Zechareah asked, Whence had ye these precious gifts? Myriam answered, An angel from God places the fruit before me; eat, my uncle, and be satisfied.'"

The writer thus leaves the story of the miraculous food to Fatima's prayer, and goes on as follows:—

'At another season of the fast, this family of charity endured a severe trial, which was miraculously and graciously rewarded. Fatima had a female slave, who shared with her equally the comforts and the toils of life.

'The food allotted to every member of Ali's family was two small barley cakes for each day; none had more or less throughout the family. The labour of domestic affairs was shared by Fatima with her female slave, and each took their day for grinding the barley at the chuckee,[25] with which the cakes were made.

'On the—day of Rumzaun, the corn was ground as usual, the cakes made, and the moment for opening the fast anxiously anticipated, by this abstemious family. The evening arrived, and when the family had fulfilled their prayer-duty, the party assembled round the homely dustha-khawn with thankful hearts, and countenances beaming with perfect content. All had their allotted portions, but none had yet tasted of their cakes,

when the voice of distress caught their ears. "Give me, oh, give me, for the love of God! something to relieve my hunger and save my famishing family from perishing." Fatima caught up her barley cakes, and ran out to the supplicant, followed by her husband, the two children, and the slave. The cakes were given to the distressed creature, and as they comprised their whole stock, no further supply awaited their returning steps, nor even a substitute within the bare walls of their cottage; a few grains of salt had been left from cooking the barley cakes, and each took a little of the small quantity, to give a relish to the water they now partook of freely; and then retired to sleep away the remembrance of hunger.

'The next day found them all in health, and with hearts at peace; the day was passed in useful occupation, and when evening drew nigh, the same humble fare was ready for the fasting family, whose appetites were doubly keen by the lengthened abstinence. Again they meet to partake in gratitude the great gift of Divine goodness, wholesome sustenance; when, lo! the sound of sorrowing distress, petitioning in the holy name adored by these pious souls,—"For the Love of God!"—arrested their attention. An appeal so urgently made carried with it a command to their devout hearts, and the meal so long delayed to their own necessities was again surrendered to the beggar's prayers.

'This family of charity had returned to their empty hut, and were seated in pious conversation to beguile their sufferings; not a murmuring word or sigh escaped their sanctified mouths. As the evening advanced thus occupied, a pleasing joy seemed to fill the heart of Fatima, who secretly had sorrowed for her good dear children's privations; presently a bright and powerful light filled the room, an angel stood before them; his appearance gave them no alarm;—they beheld his presence with humility. "Thy good deeds", said the angel (Gabriel), "are acceptable to God, the All Merciful! by whose command I come to satisfy the demands of mortal nature; this fruit (dates) is the gift of Him you serve; eat and be at peace." The meal was ample which the angel brought to this virtuous family, and having placed it before them, he vanished from their sight.'

The Chuckee, before mentioned, is two flat circular stones (resembling grindstones in England), the upper stone has a peg or handle fixed in it, near the edge, with which it is forced round, by the person grinding, who is seated on the floor; the corn is thrown in through a circular hole on the upper stone, and the flour works out at the edges between the two stones. This is the only method of grinding corn for the immense population throughout Oude, and most other parts of Hindoostaun even to the present day. The late King of Oude, Ghauzieood deen Hyder, was at one time much pressed by some English friends of his, to introduce water-mills, for the purpose of grinding corn; he often spoke of the proposed plan to the Meer, and declared his sole motive for declining the improvement was the consideration he had for the poor women, who by this employment made an excellent living in every town and village, and who must, by the introduction of mills, be distressed for the means of support. 'My poor women', he would often say, 'shall never have cause to reproach me, for depriving them of the use and benefit of their chuckee.'

I have before said it is not my intention to offer opinions on the character of the Mussulmaun people, my business being merely to relate such things as I have heard and seen amongst them. The several translations and anecdotes I take the opportunity of placing in these letters, are from authorities the Mussulmauns style, hudeeth (authentic),—that are not, cannot, be doubted, as they have been handed down either by Mahumud or by the Emaums, whose words are equally to be relied on. When any passages in their sacred writings are commented on by different authors, they give their authority for the opinion offered, as Emaum Such-a-one explains it thus. You understand, therefore, that the Mussulmauns believe these miracles to have occurred to the members of their Prophet's family as firmly as we believe in the truth of our Holy Scripture.

[1] *Kahani*.

[2] *Thandi*.

[3] See p. 13.

[4] *Rozadar*, 'one who keeps fast' (*roza*).

[5] *Spinacea oleracea*, or *Basella alba*.

[6] Dhall [*dal*] is a sort of pea, sometimes cooked in a savoury way with garlic, salt, ghee, pepper and herbs. It is about the consistence of thick pea-soup—but without meat. [*Author*.]

[7] But it is directed that infirm people, unable to fast, should feed a poor person when the fast is over. Women in child and those suckling children are advised to fast at some other more convenient season.

[8] 'Idu'l-fitr, 'the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast'.

[9] *Dahi*.

[10] The Ajwah date is never sold in Arabia, because the Prophet advised that whosoever break the fast every day with, six or seven of those fruits need fear neither poison nor magic.—Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 401 f.

[11] Known as *siwayan*, which Musalman servants present on this day to their European masters in India.

[12] *Nazr, nazar*.

[13] A lumbering, keelless barge, formerly much used by Europeans travelling on the Ganges and its tributaries: *bajra* meaning 'heavy'.

[14] *Khil'at.*

[15] *Domni,* a woman of the Dom or singer class.

[16] *Sitara,* 'three-stringed', but often possessing four or more strings of steel and brass wire, played with a steel wire frame.

[17] *Saranyi*.

[18] *Dhol*: 'dhome' is a mistake.

[19] *Hadis,* the sayings of the Prophet, not of an uninspired divine or teacher.

[20] *Dastarkhwan,* a modification of the Arab leathern table-spread (*sufra*).

[21] *Tharid,* bread moistened with broth and mixed with scraps of meat.

[22] Maryam.

[23] 'Isa'l-Masih.

[24] Zakariya (*Koran,* iii. 32, vi. 85, xix. 1-12, xxi. 89).

[25] *Chakki*.

LETTER IX

The Hadje (Pilgrimage to Mecca).—Commanded to be performed by Mahumud.—Eagerness of both sexes to visit the Prophet's tomb.—Qualifications requisite for the undertaking.—Different routes from India to Mecca.—Duties of the pilgrims at the Holy House.—Mecca and its environs.—Place of Abraham.—The Bedouins.—Anecdote of a devotee and two pilgrims.—A Bedouin Arab, and the travellers to Mecca.—The Kaabah (Holy House).—Superstitious regard to a chain suspended there.—Account of the gold water-spout.—Tax levied on pilgrims visiting the tomb of Mahumud by the Sheruff of Mecca.—Sacred visit to the tombs of Ali, Hasan, and Hosein.—The importance attached to this duty.—Travellers annoyed by the Arabs.—An instance recorded.—The Nudghiff Usheruff.—Anecdotes of Syaad Harshim.

'The Pilgrimage to Mecca' is commanded by Mahumud to his followers at least once during their lifetime, provided the obstacles are not insurmountable. Indulgences are made for the sick, or individual poverty. All who have the means at command, whatever may be their distance from the place, are expected to perform the Hadje themselves if possible; or, if prevented by any circumstances they cannot control, they are required to pay the expenses of other persons willing to be their proxies.

Whatever information I have acquired on the subject of this pilgrimage has been gleaned from frequent conversations with Meer Hadjee Shaah, who, as I have before remarked, performed the Hadje from Hindoostaun to Mecca, at three different periods of his eventful life.

If the fatigues, privations, and difficulties of the pilgrimage to Mecca be considered, the distance from Hindoostaun must indeed render the Hadje a formidable undertaking; yet, the piously disposed of both sexes yearn for the opportunity of fulfilling the injunctions of their Lawgiver, and at the same time, gratifying their laudable feelings of sympathy and curiosity—their sympathy, as regards the religious veneration for the place and its purposes; their curiosity, to witness with their own eyes those places rendered sacred by the words of the Khoraun in one instance, and also for the deposits contained in the several tombs of prophets, whom they have been taught to reverence and respect as the servants of God.

Every year may be witnessed in India the Mussulmauns of both sexes forming themselves into Kauflaahs[1] (parties of pilgrims) to pursue their march on this joyous expedition, believing, as they do, that they are fulfilling a sacred duty. The number of women is comparatively few, and those chiefly from the middling and lower classes of the people, whose expenses are generally paid by the rich females. The great obstacle to the higher classes performing the pilgrimage themselves is, that the person must at times be necessarily exposed to the view of the males. The lower orders are less scrupulous in this respect, who, whilst on the pilgrimage, wear a hooded cloak[2] of white calico, by which the person is tolerably well secreted, so that the aged and youthful have but one appearance; the better sort of people, however, cannot reconcile themselves to go abroad, unless they could be permitted to have their covered conveyances, which in this case is impossible.

The qualifications necessary for all to possess, ere they can be deemed fit subjects for the Hadje, are, as I learn, the following:

'They must be true Mussulmauns in their faith; that is, believe in one only true God, and that Mahumud is His Prophet.

'They must strictly obey the duties commanded by Mahumud; that is, prayer five times daily, the fast of Rumzaun, &c.

'They must be free from the world; that is, all their debts must be paid, and their family so well provided for, according to their station, that no one dependent on them may be in

want of the necessaries of life during the absence of the pilgrim from his home and country.

'They must abstain from all fermented or intoxicating liquors, and also from all things forbidden to be eaten by the law (which is strictly on the Mosaic principle).

'They must freely forgive their enemies; and if they have given any one cause of offence, they must humble themselves, and seek to be forgiven.

'They must repent of every evil they have committed, either in thought, word, or deed, against God or their neighbour.'

Thus prepared, the pious Mussulmaun sets out on his supposed duty, with faith in its efficacy, and reliance on the goodness of Divine Providence to prosper him in the arduous undertaking.

Many Kauflaahs from the Upper Provinces of India, travel overland to Bombay; others make Calcutta their place of embarkation, in the Arab ships, which visit those ports annually with returning pilgrims from Arabia, cargoes of coffee, Arabian fruits, and drugs. Some few enterprising people make the whole pilgrimage by land; this is, however, attended with so many and severe difficulties, that but few of the present day have courage to attempt it. In those cases their road would be from Delhie to Cashmire, through Buckaria,[3] making a wide circuit to get into Persia. This is the most tedious route, but possesses the advantages of more inhabited places on the line of march, and therefore provisions are the more readily procured. There is one route from the Lahore Province,—the English territory here is bounded by the river Suttledge, which the traveller crosses into the Sikh country,—through Afghastaan and Persia. I have not heard of the Kauflaahs making this their road of late; there seems to be always a disposition to fear the Sikhs,[4] who are become a powerful nation under Runjeet Singh; but I am not aware what ground the pilgrims have for their distrust, except that they can scarcely expect the same courtesy from these people as from the Mussulmauns, who would naturally aid and assist the pilgrims, and respect the persons thus labouring to accomplish the command of their Prophet.

Whatever may be the chosen route, the pilgrims must make up their minds to many trials necessarily incident to the undertaking; and to the habits of the Mussulmauns of India, I cannot suppose any fatigue or trial greater than the voyage by sea, in an Arab vessel. It is well for those persons whose hearts have undergone that thorough change, which by the law fits them for the Hadje; with such men, earthly calamities, privations, or any other mere mortal annoyances, are met with pious fortitude, having consolations within which strengthen the outward man: in all their trials they will say, 'It is in the road of God, by Him cometh our reward'.

The duty of the pilgrims, on their arrival at the Holy Place, is to worship God, and visit the tombs of the Prophets. There are forms and regulations to be observed in the manner of worship; certain circuits to be made round the Kaabah; saluting with the lips the sacred

stone therein deposited; and calling to remembrance the past wonders of God, with reverence and piety of heart. I have often heard Meer Hadjee Shaah speak of the comfort a humble-minded pilgrim enjoys at the time he is making his visit to the Holy House; he says, 'There the heart of the faithful servant of God is enlightened and comforted; but the wicked finds no rest near Kaabah'.

The pilgrims visit the tombs of every prophet of their faith within their reach; as the mausoleum of Hasan and Hosein, the Nudghiff Usheruff of Ali, and, if it be possible, Jerusalem also. At Dimishk (Damascus) they pay respect to the burying-place of Yieyah[5] (St. John), over whose earthly remains is erected, they say, the Jumna Musjud[6] (mosque), to which the faithful resort on Fridays (their Sabbath) to prayer.

Within the confines of the Holy House, life is held so sacred that not the meanest living thing is allowed to be destroyed; and if even by accident the smallest insect is killed, the person who has caused the death is obliged to offer in atonement, at the appointed place for sacrificing to God, sheep or goats according to his means.[7]

According to the description of Meer Hadjee Shaah the city of Mecca is situated in the midst of a partially barren country; but at the spot called Taaif,[8]—only one day's journey from Mecca,—the soil is particularly fertile, producing all kinds of fruit and vegetables in great abundance, and the air remarkably pure and healthy. The word Taaif implies in the Arabic 'the circuits completed'. It is recorded 'that the angel Gabriel brought this productive soil, by God's command, and placed it at a convenient distance from Mecca, in order that the pilgrims and sojourners at the Holy House might be benefited by the produce of the earth, without having them sufficiently near to call off their attention from the solemn duty of worshipping their God, which they are expressly called upon to perform at Mecca'.

My informant tells me that there is a stone at Mecca known by the appellation of 'Ibraahim Mukhaun' (Place of Abraham):[9] on this is seen the mark of a human foot, and believed by pilgrims, on good authority, to be the very stone on which Abraham rested his foot when making occasional visits to his son Ishmael: at the performance of this duty he never dismounted from his camel, in compliance with his sacred promise made to Sarah the mother of Isaac.

The pilgrimage to Mecca is most securely performed by those persons who travel in a humble way; riches are sure to attract the cupidity of the Bedouins. A poor pilgrim they respect, and with him they will share their last meal or coin. The Bedouin Arab delights in hospitably entertaining men of his own faith, provided they are really distressed; but the consequence of deception would be a severe visitation on the delinquent. The two following stories I have received from Meer Hadjee Shaah, descriptive of some of the incidents that occur to pilgrims, and therefore may be acceptable here.

'A good Mussulmaun of Hindoostaun resolved on undertaking the Hadje, being under the strong impression of a warning dream that his earthly career would speedily terminate. He travelled on foot, with one companion only, who was a faithfully-attached friend; they

had no worldly wealth, and journeyed on their way as mendicants, trusting for each day's food to the bountiful care of Divine Providence: nor was their trust in vain, since the hearts of all who saw these pious travellers were moved by the power of God to yield them present relief.

'On a certain day these pilgrims had journeyed from the dawn until eve without a meal, or meeting any one to assist them, when they were at last encountered by a religious devotee of another nation, with whom they conversed for some time. Their new acquaintance having found they were indeed poor, not even possessed of a single coin to purchase corn or food of any kind, expressed his hearty sympathy, and desired to be of service to the pilgrims; he therefore disclosed to them that he was in possession of a secret for the transmutation of metals,[10] and offered some of his prepared powder to the elder Hadjee, by which he would have persuaded him want should never again intrude; adding, "You will with this be independent of all future care about subsistence on your pilgrimage."

'The pious Hadjee, however, was of a different mind from the devotee, and politely rejected the offer of the powder by which he was to acquire riches, declaring that the possession of such an article would rob him of the best treasure he enjoyed, namely, the most perfect reliance on Him, by whom the birds of the air are fed from day to day without labour or care, and who had hitherto fed him both in the city and in the desert; and that in this trust he had comforts and consolations which the whole world could not grant him: "My God, in whom I trust, will never desert me whilst I rely on Him alone for succour and support."'

My excellent friend says, such pilgrims as the one described may pass through the haunts of the Bedouins without fear or sorrow, and they are always respected. The next anecdote I am about to relate will develop more particularly the Arab's natural disposition, and how necessary it is for men really to be that they would seem, when placed by circumstances within their reach. Some of the parties were known to my venerable relative.

'Six Mussulmauns from India were travelling on foot in Arabia; they assumed the title of pilgrim mendicants. On a certain day they drew nigh to the tent of a Bedouin Arab, who went out to meet them, and entering into conversation, soon discovered by their talk that they were poor pilgrims from India, who depended on casual bounties from men of their faith for their daily meal. The Bedouin, though a robber, had respect for the commands of his religion; and with that respect he boasted a due share of hospitable feeling towards all who were of his own faith; he accordingly told them they were welcome to his home, and the best meal he could provide for them, which offers they very gladly accepted, and followed him to the tent.

'The Arab desired his wife to take water to his guests and wash their feet after the fatigue of their day's march, and told her in secret to divert their attention whilst he went out in search of plunder, that the hospitality of an Arab might be shown to the strangers. Then mounting his fleet-camel, he was quickly out of sight. Many a weary circuit the Arab

made, his ill stars prevailed; not a Kauflaah nor a traveller could he meet, whence a supply might be extracted, to be the means of providing for his guests; his home was penniless, and with the Bedouins, none give credit. His bad success dispirited him, and he returned to the back of his tent, to consult what was best to be done in this emergency. The only thing he possessed in the world fit for food was the animal on which he rode, from day to day, to levy contributions upon the passing traveller.

'His only immediate resource was to kill his favourite camel. His honour was at stake; the sacrifice would be great; he was attached to the beast; the loss would be irreparable, he thought:—yet every weighty argument on one side to preserve the camel's life, was as quickly overturned in the reflection of his Arabian honour;—his visitors must be fed, and this was the only way he could contrive the meal. With trembling hands and half-averted eyes, the camel's blood was shed; with one plunge his favourite ceased to breathe. For some minutes, the Arab could not look on his poor faithful servant; but pride drove pity from her haunt, and the animal was quickly skinned and dressed in savoury dishes, with his wife's assistance. At length, the food prepared, the Arab and his wife placed the most choice portions before their guests, and whilst they dined attended them with respectful assiduity; selecting for each the most delicate pieces, to induce the travellers to eat, and evince the cordial welcome tendered by the host.[11]

'The travellers having dined; the Arab and his wife took their turn at the feast with appetites most keen,—forgetful even, for the time, whence the savoury dishes were procured; and if an intruding thought of his favourite camel shot across the mind of the Arab, it was quickly chased in the reflection that his prided honour was secured by the sacrifice, and that reflection was to him a sufficient compensation.

'The pilgrims, refreshed by food, were not inclined to depart, and as they were urged to stay by their friendly host, they slept comfortably in the Arab's tent, on coarse mats, the only bed known to the wandering Bedouins. The morning found them preparing to pursue their march; but the Arab pressed their continuance another day, to share with him in the abundance his camel afforded for the whole of the party. The travellers were not unwilling to delay their departure, for they had journeyed many days without much ease, and with very little food; their host's conversation also was amusing, and this second day of hospitality by the Arab was an addition to the comfort and convenience of the weary pilgrims.

'The following morning, as was fixed, the travellers rose to take leave of their benevolent host and his attentive wife; each as he embraced the Arab, had some grateful word to add, for the good they had received at his hands. The last of the pilgrims, having embraced the Arab, was walking from the tent, when the dog belonging to the host seized the man by his garment and held him fast. "What is this?" inquired the Arab, "surely you must have deceived me; my dog is wise as he is trusty,—he never yet lied to his master. This labaadhar of yours he has taken a fancy to it seems; but you shall have my coat of better-looking stuff for your old chintz garment. We will exchange labaadhars,[12] my friend," said the Arab, throwing his own towards the hesitating traveller. His fellow-pilgrims, hearing altercation, advanced, and with surprise listened to the parley going on between

the host and guest.—"I have a veneration for my chintz, old as it is," said the pilgrim; "it has been my companion for many years, brother; indeed I cannot part with it." The dog held fast the garment, and the Arab, finding persuasion was but loss of words, cast a frown of deep meaning on the travellers, and addressed them:—"Ye came to me beggars, hungry and fatigued; I believed ye were poor, and I sheltered ye these two days, and fed ye with my best; nay, more, I even killed my useful camel, that your hunger might be appeased. Had I known there was money with any of ye, my poor beast's life might yet have been spared; but it is too late to repent the sacrifice I made to serve you," Then, looking steadfastly at the chintz-robed traveller, he added, in a tone of sharp authority, "Come, change garments!—here, no one disputes my commands!"

'The trembling pilgrim reluctantly obeyed. The Arab took up the garment and proceeded with it to where the fire was kindled. "Now we shall see what my trusty dog discovered in your tattered chintz," said the Arab, as he threw it on the fire. All the pilgrims hovered round the flames to watch what would result from the consuming garment, with intense anxiety. The Arab drew from the embers one hundred gold mohurs, to the surprise and wonder of all the travellers, save him who owned the chintz garment; he had kept his treasures so secretly, that even in their greatest distress he allowed his brother pilgrims to suffer, with himself, want and privations which, owing to his lust for gold, he had no heart to relieve.

'The Arab selected from the prize he had obtained, by the exchange of garments, ten gold mohurs, and presented them to the owner with a sharp rebuke for his duplicity, alluding to the meanness he had been guilty of in seeking and accepting a meal from a Bedouin, whilst he possessed so much wealth about his person; then adding,—"There is nothing hidden from God; I killed my sole treasure to give food to the poor hungry travellers; my deed of charity is rewarded; deceit in you is punished by the loss of that wealth you deserved not to possess.—Depart, and be thankful that your life is spared; there are some of my tribe who would not have permitted you to go so easily: you have enough spared to you for your journey; in future, avoid base deceptions."'

Of the Kaabah (Holy House) many wonderful things are recorded in the several commentaries on the Khoraun, and other ancient authorities, which it would fill my letter to detail. I will, however, make mention of the mystic chain as a sample of the many superstitious habits of that age.

It is said, 'A chain was suspended from the roof of Kaabah, whither the people assembled to settle (by the touch) disputed rights in any case of doubt between contending parties.'

Many curious things are related as having been decided by this mystic chain,[13] which it should seem, by their description, could only be reached by the just person in the cause to be decided, since, however long the arm of the faulty person, he could never reach the chain; and however short the person's arm who was in the right, he always touched the chain without difficulty. I will here relate one of the anecdotes on this subject.

'Two pilgrims travelled together in Arabia; on the way one robbed the other of his gold coins, and secreted them carefully in the hollow of his cane or staff. His companion missing his cash, accused him of the theft, and when disputes had risen high between them, they agreed to visit the mystic chain to settle their difference. Arriving at Kaabah, their intentions being disclosed to the keepers of the place, the thief claimed the privilege, being the accused, of first reaching to touch the chain; he then gave the staff in which he had deposited the money into his fellow-pilgrim's hands, saying, "Keep this, whilst I go to prove my innocence." He next advanced and made the usual prayer, adding to which, "Lord, whatever I have done amiss I strive to remedy; I repent, and I restore"; then raising his arm, he touched the chain without difficulty. The spectators were much surprised, because all believed he was actually the thief. The man who lost his gold, freely forgave his fellow-traveller, and expressed sorrow that he had accused him wrongfully; yet he wished to prove that he was not guilty of falsehood—having really lost his gold,—and declared he also would approach the chain to clear himself from such a suspicion. "Here," said he to the criminal, "take back your staff;" and he advanced within the Kaabah, making the required prayer, and adding, "Now my Creator will grant me mercy and favour, for He knoweth my gold was stolen, and I have not spoken falsely in that, yet I know not who is the thief." He raised his hand and grasped the chain, at which the people were much amazed.'

It is presumed, by writers of a later period, that this circumstance threw the mystic properties of the chain out of favour; for it was soon after removed secretly, these writers add, and its disappearance made the subject of much conjecture; no one could ever ascertain by whom it was taken, but the general belief is, that it was conveyed away by supernatural agency. Another marvellous story is recorded of the Kaabah, as follows:

'A poor pilgrim, nearly famishing with hunger, while encircling the Holy House, on looking up towards the building observed the water-spout of gold[14] hanging over his head. He prayed that his wants might be relieved, adding, "To Thee, O God, nothing is difficult. At thy command, that spout of gold may descend to my relief;" holding the skirt of his garment to receive it, in answer to his faithful address. The spout had been firmly fixed for ages, yet it fell as the pilgrim finished his prayer. He lost no time in walking away with his valuable gift, and offered it to a merchant for sale, who immediately recognizing the gold spout of Kaabah, accused the pilgrim of sacrilege, and without delay handed him over to the Sheruff[15] of Mecca, to answer for his crime. He declared his innocence to the Sheruff, and told him how he became possessed of the treasure. The Sheruff had some difficulty in believing his confession, yet perceiving he had not the appearance of a common thief, he told him, if what he had declared was true, the goodness of God would again be extended towards him on the trial he proposed to institute. The spout was restored to its original position on the Kaabah, and made secure. This done, the pilgrim was required to repeat his faithful address to God, in the presence of the assembled multitude; when, to their astonishment, it again descended at the instant his prayer was finished. Taking up the spout without hesitation, he was walking away with it very quietly, when the people flocked round him, believing him to be some sainted person, and earnestly requested him to bestow on them small portions of his raiment as relics of his holy person. The Sheruff then clothed him in rich garments, and in

lieu of the gold spout—which none could now dispute his right to,—the same weight of gold in the current coin of Arabia was given to him, thus raising him from beggary to affluence.'

I have often heard Meer Hadjee Shaah speak of this gold spout which adorns the Kaabah, being held in great veneration by the pilgrims who make the Hadje to that place.

All Mussulmauns performing the pilgrimage pay a kind of tax to the Sheruff of Mecca. The present possessors of power in Mecca are of the Soonie sect. The admission money, in consequence, falls heavy on the Sheahs, from whom they exact heavy sums, out of jealousy and prejudice. This renders it difficult for the poor Sheah pilgrim to gain admittance, and it is even suspected that in many cases they are induced to falsify themselves, when it is demanded of them what sect they belong to, rather than be denied entrance after their severe trial to reach the confines of Mecca. The tax levied on the Soonies is said to be trifling in proportion to that of the Sheahs.

Amongst the different places visited by each Hadjee,—after the circuit is made,—a zeearut to the tomb of Ali at Nudghiff Usheruff, and the far-famed Kraabaallah of Hasan and Hosein are esteemed indispensable engagements, if it be possible; there is not, however, any command to this effect in the Mussulmaun law, but the Sheahs, zealous for their leaders, are willing to think they do honour to their memory, by visiting those tombs which contain the mortal remains of their respected Emaums.

Travelling through this part of Arabia, Meer Hadjee Shaah says, is attended with much inconvenience and fatigue; but he failed not at each pilgrimage he made, to pay a visit to the mausoleums of his forefathers. He tells me that Kraabaallah was for a long time almost an interdicted visit, through the power of the Soonies, who were so jealous of the respect paid to the Emaums, that the Turks (who are Soonies) raised the price of admission within the gates to one hundred gold pieces. At that time very few people could gratify their yearnings beyond the outside view of the mausoleum; and even now that the entrance-money is much reduced the sums so collected yield a handsome revenue to the Turks.

I will here introduce an anecdote which proves the value certain individuals set on the zeearut (sacred visit) to Kraabaallah, which I have received from my revered pilgrim-friend and relative.

'Amongst the applicants for admission at the gates of Kraabaallah was an aged woman clothed in ragged garments. The gate-keeper, judging from her appearance, that she was destitute of money, scoffed at her presumption; she, however, produced the price of admission with much confidence of manner, and demanded entrance without further delay. The keepers now suspected the old woman to be a thief, and commenced interrogating her how she became possessed of so large a sum. The poor old woman answered them, "I have laboured hard for thirty years at my spinning-wheel, and have debarred myself during those years of all superfluities, contenting myself with a bare subsistence; I have done this that the dearest wish of my heart might once in my lifetime

be gratified, to visit and weep over the tomb of my Emaums. Here, take the fruits of my labour, and let me have my reward; every moment delayed is agony to me.'"

In journeying through Arabia, pilgrims are much annoyed with the intrusion they so frequently meet with from the idle Arabs, who force their way into every stranger's place of sojourn without ceremony, to strain the nerves of charity from 'brethren of the faith'.

There is a maxim well known amongst Mussulmauns,—the words of Mahumud,—'With the faithful, all are brothers'; and this is the pass-word with those idle men who pretend to have too much pride to beg, and are yet too indolent to labour for their support.

A Mussulmaun,—however great his rank,—is seated with his friends and attendants; an Arab, who lives by this method, stalks into the tent or apartment, salutes the master with, 'Salaam-oon-ali Koom!' (health or peace be with you!) and unbidden takes his seat on the nearest vacant spot to the head person of the assembly. After the first surprise excited by the stranger's intrusion, he looks at the master and says, 'I claim the privilege of a brother'; by which it is to be understood the Arab requires money from the richer man of his faith. A small sum is tendered, he receives it without indicating any sense of obligation, rises from his seat, and moves off with no other than the familiar salute which marked his entrance, 'Salaam-oon-ali Koom!'[16]

A rich Eunuch, of Lucknow, accompanied Meer Hadjee Shaah on one of his pilgrimages, with a large Kauflaah. Upon one occasion, when the whole party were seated in friendly conclave, some of these idle Arabs entered in the way described; the Eunuch was unacquainted with the language, or the manners of Arabia, and expressed his dislike to their freedom in warm language, and evident anger in his countenance; many had claimed the tribute of brotherhood, when the Eunuch, who was accustomed in his own country to receive respect and deference from inferiors, lost all patience with the uncourtly intrusion of the Arabs, and evinced his wrath to the proud Arab then present, who understood by his violent manners, if not by his language, that he was offended with him. The good sense and kindly manner of Meer Hadjee Shaah restored tranquillity in the assembly; he gave money to the man, and apologized for his friend's ignorance of the customs of Arabia: thus preventing the enraged Arab from fulfilling his threat of forcing the Eunuch to appear before the Sheruff of Mecca.

Nudghiff Usheruff, the burying-place of Ali, is the resort of many pious men of the Mussulmaun persuasion, as well as the shrine to be visited by 'the faithful' of the Sheah sect. Amongst the many singular stories I have heard of the devout men of that religion, I select one from the number relating to a man whose abode was—through choice—near the shrine of their beloved Emaum Ali. I shall give it in exactly the style I have received it, through my husband's translation, from an old work in the Persian language.

'In the reign of Nadir Shaah,[17] a devout man of the faith took up his abode in the vicinity of Nudghiff Usheruff in Arabia. He was a Syaad, named Harshim;[18] a man of great learning, whose heart was set on seeking with love the most merciful God, whom he served faithfully. Syaad Harshim, conscious that the riches and honours of this world

are inadequate to procure eternal happiness, and feeling convinced that the more humble a man's mode of living is, the greater are the prospects of escaping temptations in this life of probation, resolved on labouring for his daily bread, and relinquished with his paternal home, the abundance and riches which his ancient house had long boasted.

'Syaad Harshim selected Nudghiff Usheruff for his sojourn, and the business of a woodman for a calling. The piety of his life, and the goodness of his heart, drew upon him the respect of the inhabitants of the city. It was his practice to spend every day in the jungle (wilderness) cutting fire-wood, of which he gave a light burthen to his ass; and returning towards evening to the populated city, he found ready customers for the load which his day's labour produced. His honesty and love of truth were proverbial: he asked the price for his wood which he intended to take; if more was offered, it was rejected,—if less, he would not accept it.

'One evening, a man of superior address to his usual customers, but poorly clad, met him at the entrance of the street, and bargained for the load of wood. Syaad Harshim was penetrating, and could not help expressing his surprise at the circumstance of one, evidently moving in a higher sphere, being there to purchase wood. "I see," said the Syaad to the purchaser, "that your station is superior to your circumstances!—How is this?"—"My story," replied the stranger, "is not, I fear, uncommon in this age of the world. I will relate it briefly:—I was once a rich man, and my mind was set on making the pilgrimage. Aware that valuables and money would be an incumbrance to me on my journey, I applied to the Kauzy of this city to take charge of all my worldly riches during my absence, to which he readily consented, and having packed my jewels, money, and valuables in a strong chest with a good lock, I gave it into his charge and departed.

'"My pilgrimage accomplished, and tired of a wandering life, I returned home after a few years' absence, waited on the Kauzy, and applied for the treasure I had deposited in his care; he denied all knowledge of me or my valuables, pretended not to understand me, called me an impostor, and eventually drove me from his house with violence. I again tried the Kauzy by expostulation, and sent my friends to him, but all without benefit; for here I am as you see me, Syaad Harshim, reduced to penury by the Kauzy's injustice. The world esteems him a person of great character, and condemns me as the unjust one. Well! I can say no more; I know that God is merciful, I put my trust in Him!" "Ameen," responded the Syaad, "do you so, and it will yet be well with you."

'The stranger lingered with the sympathizing Woodman, and after some time had elapsed he asked him if he would interest himself with the Kauzy to effect a restitution of his rights, adding, "All are willing to give you, O Syaad, great credit for superior virtues." Harshim replied he had no merit to call for his fellow-mortals' good opinion, but as he felt interested in the affair he would certainly visit the unjust man, and requested the stranger to meet him at the Kauzy's door on the following morning.

'Arrived at the Kauzy's residence, Harshim was received with evident pleasure, for though but a woodman, he yet was known to be a person of superior rank, and a man universally respected for his great piety. After the common salutations, the Syaad stated

the object of his visit, assuring the Kauzy he was actuated purely by good feelings towards him in the part he had undertaken;—being desirous only of preserving his soul from the evil that attended the unjust men of this world, who die without repentance and restitution to those whom they have injured. Then calling the stranger forward, he said with firmness of voice and manner, "Behold this man! he left money and jewels in your charge whilst he went on his duty to the pilgrimage; he comes now to demand his property, give back his chest of treasures without delay, honestly and justly, as you hope for mercy in a future state!"

'The Kauzy answered, "I have it not, Syaad Harshim, you may believe me; this fellow wickedly raises the falsehood to injure me, and it is as much to his own dishonour as to my discredit. I beg, therefore, you will neither give credit to his base assertions, nor think so meanly of me; my station as Kauzy of this district should, methinks, screen me from such imputations."—"True," said Harshim, "the station you occupy in the world, and the place you hold as Kauzy, prevent suspicion from attaching to you; hence this poor man has not yet found redress to the justice of his claims. I would have you believe me sincerely your friend, in desiring to bring your heart to repentance, and thus only can your soul's safety be secured. I know you to have this man's property, and your own heart even now convicts you of the injustice you practise. Nothing is hidden from God;—reflect on the punishment prepared for the unrepenting hypocrite. Listen, whilst I relate to you my own convictions, or rather experience, of that terrible punishment which is prepared for the impenitent hardened sinner beyond the grave.

'"I have been a woodman for several years, and by my daily labour have earned my coarse food. Some years since, I was sick and unable to pursue my usual occupation; my supply was thus cut off. Requiring temporary relief, I applied to a rich Banker of this city for a trifling loan; my request was promptly complied with, and I engaged to repay the sum by two pice each day upon again resuming my employment. By the mercy of God I recovered; and on the evening of each day, as I sold the wood my day's labour produced in the market, I paid the Banker two pice. On the very day, however, that the last two were to have been paid, the Banker died. Thus I remained his debtor still. Often had I thought of the circumstance that I was his debtor, and with real regret; yet the sum was small, and with this I became reconciled.

'"Not long after his decease I was visited with a dream, important to all the world to know, and I therefore desire to make it public. Judgement was opened to my view; the beauty of heaven was displayed on one side, and the torments of hell on the other. My dream presented many people waiting their award, whom I had known in life, and amongst the number my creditor the Banker; he was standing on the brink of that fiery yawning gulf which is prepared for the wicked and unjust. His attendant angels produced the documents of their faithful keeping,—good and evil actions of every mortal are thus registered,—one exhibited a small blank book in which not one good deed had been recorded, and that presented by the other, containing the evils of his ways on earth, appeared to me an immense volume filled throughout.

""Take him to his merited torments!' was pronounced in an awful tone of command.—'Have mercy! have pity!' cried the Banker, in a supplicating voice.—'Produce one claim for pity,' was heard.—The Banker in agony looked wildly round, as if in search of something he might urge in extenuation, when casting his eyes on me he exclaimed, 'There! oh, there is one! who when in trouble I relieved, and he is still my debtor!'

'"In my dream this appeared too slender a benefit to draw forth the slightest remission of the punishments awarded to his deserts. 'Away with him!' was heard.—'Oh!' cried the Banker's soul, 'draw near to me, thou good, virtuous, and humble Woodman, that the reflected light of thy virtues may give one instant's ease to my present torture. Let me but touch the righteous Harshim, and I will depart to my just punishment with submission!'

'"I was permitted to gratify the unhappy spirit, wondering at the same time what benefit he could derive from touching me. Advancing near the tortured soul he stretched forth his hand and touched me on the knee; it was like a firebrand; I drew back hastily and found my knee was scorched. 'Return to men with warnings,' said the wretched spirit. 'Tell them of my unhappy state; tell them what are the tortures of the wicked; that touch you have received on your knee, is of the same nature my whole body suffers in eternal flames.'—The pain I suffered in my knee disordered my sleep; I awoke in agony, and here it is to this day," said the Woodman, untying a bandage from his knee. "Examine the place, and be warned, O Kauzy, by the terrible certainty I have brought from that Banker whom you knew, and who is now suffering for his injustice on earth. I have been lame from that night of my dream," continued Syaad Harshim, "but I shall rejoice in the pain, if the example influence one hardened sinner to repent, whilst repentance may avail."

'During the recital of the dream, Syaad Harshim watched the countenance of the Kauzy, who tried in vain to hide the guilty changes of his face. The Syaad at last fixed his keen eyes on him, "Now, friend," said he, "it would be great folly to add guilt to guilt by farther subterfuge. I know the day, the hour, you ingeniously substituted a false key to this man's chest; I could tell you what you wickedly took out; the place where it is secreted, even, is not hidden from my knowledge; go, bring it from your wife's apartment; a little labour will remove it from the corner near the bedstead."

'The Kauzy was now subdued by the commanding truths of the Syaad, and his heart being softened by the fearful relation of the Banker's torment, he sank to the earth with shame and remorse,—"I acknowledge my sin, thou holy man of truth;—forgive me!" he cried, "forgive me, oh my God! I am indeed repentant, and by this holy man's means I am brought to a sense of my guilt!" He then went to the women's apartment, brought out the chest and delivered it to the owner, entreating Syaad Harshim to forgive him.

'The Syaad replied, "I have nothing to forgive, nor power to remit; my advice you have freely, and may it serve you! Seek pardon from God who loves to be sought, and whose mercy never faileth. He is not the God of revenge, where repentance is sincere; but He is the God of mercy to all who seek Him faithfully. His mercy is already extended to you, for He has given you time to repent:—but for His mercy, you had been taken to your punishment, whilst you had no thoughts of repentance in your guilty heart. Farewell! let

me know by your future life, that Syaad Harshim's lost labour in the jungle of this day, has produced something to the better harvest—awakening one sinner to a sense of his danger.'"

Meer Hadjee Shaah has related to me many singular anecdotes of this Syaad Harshim, which are generally spoken of, and believed to be true by the sojourners at Nudghiff Usheruff. His memory is much respected by the Mussulmauns, and the acts of his life are registered with the veneration paid to saints, amongst people of more enlightened nations. They confidently assert, that whenever Syaad Harshim presented himself at the entrance to Nudghiff Usheruff, the gates, which are always kept locked, flew open to receive him.

In proof that he disregarded worldly possessions, the following is related of him in the ancient works both of Arabia and Persia:—

'The great conqueror, Nadir Shaah, on one occasion visited the shrine of Ali, with a vast retinue of his chiefs, courtiers, and followers. The King heard, whilst at Nudghiff Usheruff, of the sainted life led by the Woodman, Syaad Harshim, in that neighbourhood, and he felt disposed to tender a present of money and valuables, to induce the Syaad's prayer for his future prosperity. Accordingly, the King commanded trays to be filled from his Indian spoils, which were sent with a message, humbly couched, entreating the good Syaad would accept his offering of respect, and make prayers to God for him.

'The trays were conveyed by servants of the King, who arrived at the Syaad's hut at the moment he was satisfying the demands of nature with a meal of coarse barley bread and pure water. "What is all this?" inquired the Syaad, on seeing the valuables before him. "An humble offering from the great Nadir Shaah," replied the messenger, "who entreats you will honour him by the acceptance of his presents, and offer your pious prayer for God's mercy in his behalf." "My prayers", said the Syaad, "I can promise shall be made duly and truly, but not my acceptance of his gifts. Take back these hateful, useless things! Tell Nadir Shaah, Syaad Harshim will not even touch them." The messenger tried persuasions without avail; he was constrained to return to his royal master, with his loaded trays.

'No sooner were the King's servants out of sight, than the wife of Syaad Harshim vented her disappointment in no measured strain of anger towards her husband. "Here am I," said the old lady, "a very slave in consequence of our poverty, a very beggar in appearance, and my scanty meal of coarse bread is scarce sufficient to keep me in bodily strength; surely you ought to have remembered me, when the King's offering was before you—even if you liked not to accept it for yourself."—"I might indeed", he replied, "have done as you say, wife, had I known your sentiments sooner; but I believed you were as contented as myself with homely fare and honest labour; but be comforted, you shall have a share of the next offering made by the King to Syaad Harshim, provided your present inclination remains unchanged by time." This promise quieted the wife's angry humour, and peace was again restored between them.

"'Wife," said the Syaad, "this al-kaulock[19] (Arab's coat of calico) of mine requires a little of thy labour: as I have now no other garment to change with, I trust you may please to wash it whilst I take my sleep;—one caution you must observe,—I have occasion for the water in which this dress is to be washed; preserve it carefully for me, my good wife;" and he laid him down on his mat to sleep. The wife, obedient to her husband's wishes, washed his dress, and took care to preserve the dirty water; when he awoke, she brought him the clean garment, and received his warm commendations for her diligence. She then produced the pan of dirty water, in which she had cleansed the garment, saying, "There, Syaad Harshim, I have done as you desired."—"Very good," replied her husband, "now you must farther oblige me by drinking it—you know there is nothing in this water but the sweat of my body produced by my daily labour." The wife, disgusted at the strange request of her husband, looked with amazement, and fancied he must have lost his senses. "What is this you require of me? would you poison your wife, O Syaad Harshim, with the filth from your skin, the accumulation of many days' labour in the jungles? art thou mad, to ask thy wife a request so unheard of?"

"'Listen to me, wife," said the Syaad, in gentle terms; "you profess to love, honour, and respect me, as your faithful, lawful husband; pray can the dirt from my body be more offensive to your palate than the scum of Nadir Shaah, whom you only know by name? You would have accepted the filthy offerings of a cruel man, who plundered and sacrificed his victims to obtain the treasures he possesses;—you would not have scrupled to obtain your future sustenance by the coins of Nadir Shaah, gained as they were by the spilling of human blood? Is this your love for Syaad Harshim?" The wife threw herself at her husband's feet, when his speech was finished: "Pardon me, my dear husband! pardon my ignorance and self-love; I see myself disgraced by harbouring one wish for more than is gained by honest industry. No longer have I any desire for the gold of Nadir Shaah. Contented as yourself, my dear, good husband! I will continue to labour for the honest bread that sustains, nor ever again desire my condition to be changed."'

The Woodman, Syaad Harshim, lived to a great age; many a tear hath fallen on his grave from the good pilgrims visiting the shrine of Ali, near which he was buried; and his resting place is reverenced to this day by the passing traveller of his own faith.

[1] *Kafilah*.

[2] The *burqa'*: see drawing in Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 95.

[3] Bokhara.

[4] *The Origin of the Sikhs*, by H. Colebrooke, Esq., gives a faithful picture of those warlike people. [The best account of their beliefs is by M. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Oxford, 1909.]

[5] Yahya. On the capture of Damascus by the Muhammadans, the churches were equally divided between the Christians and their conquerors. The great Cathedral of St. John was

similarly divided, and for eighty years the two religions worshipped under the same roof.—Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 50.

[6] A vulgar corruption of Jame' Masjid, the Cathedral Mosque.

[7] On the taboos attached to the sanctuary, see Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 379 f.

[8] At-Ta'if, meaning 'circumambulation'. When Adam settled at Mecca, finding the country barren, he prayed to Allah to supply him with a piece of fertile land. Immediately a mountain appeared, which, having circumambulated the Ka'aba, settled itself down eastward of Mecca. Hence it was called Kita min Sham, 'a piece of Syria,' whence it came. (Burton, ii. 336.) 'Its fertile lands produce the fruits of Syria in the midst of the Arabian desert' (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vi. 255).

[9] At Mecca are 'evident signs, with the standing place of Abraham; and he who enters it is safe' *(Koran*, iii. 90). On the north side of the Ka'aba, just by its door, is a slight hollow in the ground, lined with marble. The spot is called Mi'jan, and it is supposed to be the place where Abraham and Ishmael kneaded the chalk which they used in building the Ka'aba: the stone, with the mark of Abraham's feet, is shown.—Burckhardt, quoted by Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 337; Burton, ii. 311; Sale, *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 84.

[10] The Asiatics, generally, have faith in certain properties of chemical productions to alter the nature of the common to the precious metals. I have often witnessed the anxious exertions of Natives in India, who try all sorts of experiments in alchemy, expecting to succeed; but I have never known any other issue from the many laborious efforts of individuals than waste of time and property in these absurd schemes. [*Author*.]

[11] One of the best-known versions of this famous tale is found in *The Decameron* of Boccaccio, Day 5, novel 9. It goes back to Buddhist times, and is told of Hatim Tai, the model of Oriental liberality. For numerous parallels, see A.C. Lee, *The Decameron of Boccaccio, its Sources and Analogues*, 1909, pp. 170 ff.

[12] *Labada*, 'a rain coat, wrapper'.

[13] This is probably some local tradition, of which no record appears in travellers' accounts of the Ka'aba.

[14] On the north-west side of the Ka'aba is a water-spout, called Mi'zabu'r-Rahmah, 'the spout of Mercy'. It is made of gold, and was sent from Constantinople in A.D. 1573. It carries the rain-water from the roof, and discharges it on the grave of Ishmael.—Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 257, 337.

[15] The Sharif, 'honourable,' is the local ruler of Mecca and the Hajaz: see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, xvii. 952; Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 3.

[16] *As-Salamu-'alai-kum*, 'Peace be with you!'

[17] Nadir Shah, born a shepherd, A.D. 1687, aided Shah Tahmasp against Ashraf, leader of the Afghans, defeated him, and restored his master in 1730. Afterwards he deposed Tahmasp, and raised his infant son to the throne of Persia, under the title of 'Abbas III. But he continued to rule the country, and on the death of 'Abbas in 1736 he became king. He marched on India in 1739, defeated the Emperor Muhammad on the historic field of Panipat, sacked Delhi, and perpetrated a horrible massacre. He returned to Persia laden with spoil, but his tyranny excited the hostility of the nobles, and he was assassinated in 1747, and buried at Mashhad.

[18] Sayyid Hashim.

[19] *Alkhalaq*, Turkish, 'a coat with sleeves'.

LETTER X

The Zuckhaut (God's portion).—Syaads restricted the benefit of this charity.—The Sutkah.—The Emaum's Zaumunee (protection).—The Tenths, or Syaads' Due.—Mussulmauns attribute thanks to God only, for all benefits conferred.—Extracts from the 'Hyaatool Kaaloob'.—Mahumud's advice.—His precepts tend to inculcate and encourage charity.—Remarks on the benevolence of Mussulmauns.

On the subject of Zuckhaut, commanded by Mahumud to his followers, I shall have little to remark;—the nature of the institute is intended to oblige mankind to share with the poor a due portion of those benefits they have received through the bounty of Divine Providence. Every Mussulmaun is expected by this law to set apart from his annual income one-fortieth part, denominated Zuckhaut (God's portion), for the sole benefit of the poor. I believe there are not many,—judging by what I have witnessed among the Mussulmaun population of Hindoostaun,—who do not expend a much larger portion of their yearly income in charitable donations, than the enjoined fortieth part.

The poor Syaads are not allowed to receive any relief from 'the Zuckhaut'[1]; they being of the Prophet's blood, are not to be included with the indigent for whom these donations are generally set apart. The strict Mussulmaun of the Sheah sect usually deducts one-tenth[2] from whatever money comes into his possession as 'the Syaads' due', to whom it is distributed, as proper objects present themselves to his knowledge; much in the same way as the tribe of Levi are entitled to the tenth of the produce from their brethren of Israel by the Mosaic law.

The Syaads are likewise restricted from accepting many other charitable offerings,—sutkah for instance—by which is meant the several things composing peace-offerings, offerings in atonement, &c. The better to explain this I must here describe some of the habits of the Mussulmaun population:—When any person escapes from a threatened danger, or accident, their friends send offerings of corn, oil, and money; all that is thus sent to the person preserved, must be touched by his hand and then distributed amongst the poor and needy.

If any member of a family be ill, a tray is filled with corn, and some money laid on it: it is then placed under the bed of the sick person for the night; in the morning this is to be distributed amongst the poor. Some people cook bread, and place it in the same way with money under the bed of the sick. All these things are called Sutkah[3] in whatever form they are planned, which is done in a variety of ways; and, when distributed to the poor, are never to be offered to, nor allowed to be accepted by, the Syaad race. The scapegoat, an animal in good health and without blemish, is another offering of the Sutkah denomination: a Syaad is not allowed to be one of the number to run after the goat released from the sick chamber.

When any one is going a journey, the friends send bands of silk or riband, in the folds of which are secured silver or gold coins; these are to be tied on the arm of the person projecting the journey, and such offerings are called 'Emaum Zaumunee',[4] or the Emaum's protection. Should the traveller be distressed on his journey, he may, without blame, make use of any such deposits tied on his arm, but only in emergencies; none such occurring, he is expected, when his journey is accomplished in safety, to divide all these offerings of his friends amongst righteous people. The Syaads may accept these gifts, such being considered holy,—paak[5] is the original word used, literally clean.

They believe the Emaums have knowledge of such things as pertain to the followers of Mahumud and his descendants. Thus they will say, when desiring blessings and comforts for another person, 'Emaum Zaumunee, Zaumunee toom kero!'[6] may the Emaums protect you, and give you their safe support!

The tenths, or Syaads' dues, are never appropriated to any other use than the one designed. Thus they evince their respect to the descendants of Mahumud; by these tenths the poorer race of Syaads are mainly supported; they rarely embark in trade, and never can have any share in banking, or such professions as would draw them into dealings of usury. They are chiefly employed as writers, moonshies,[7] maulvees, and moollahs, doctors of law, and readers of the Khoraun; they are allowed to enter the army, to accept offices of state; and if they possess any employment sufficient to support themselves and family, the true Syaad will not accept from his neighbours such charitable donations as may be of service to the poor brethren of his race. The Syaads, however poor, are seldom known to intrude their distresses, patiently abiding until relief be sent through the interposing power of divine goodness.

Such is the way in which they receive the blessings showered by the orderings of the Almighty, that one never hears a Mussulmaun offer thanks to his earthly benefactor, in

return for present benefits; but 'Shooghur Allah!'[8] all thanks to God! I was somewhat surprised when first acquainted with these people, that they accepted any kind of service done them with the same salutation as when first meeting in the morning, viz. salaam, and a bow. I inquired of the Meer if there was no word in Hindoostaunie that could express the 'Thank you!' so common to us in England? He bade me remark that the Mussulmauns return thanks to God whenever they receive a benefit from mortals, whom they consider but as the agents appointed by God to distribute His gifts. 'All thanks to God!' is repeated with every benefit received; and this follows every meal or cup of water as naturally, as to eat or to drink is preceded by 'Bis ma Allah!'[9]—In the name, or to the praise of God!

Amongst the many choice things I have gleaned from the work so often quoted in my Letters, viz. 'Hyaatool Kaaloob', the following, through my Meer's aid in translation, may here be inserted.

MAHUMUD'S ADVICE

'Observe, ye faithful, there are five things most acceptable to God the Creator, from man, His creature:—

1st. 'A generous gift, made when you have the greatest necessity yourself for that which you give away.

2nd. 'All gifts that are free-will offerings of the heart, neither expecting nor desiring your bounty, should be rewarded, either by returns or acknowledgements.

3rd. 'To be most humble, when in the enjoyment of the greatest prosperity.

4th. 'To promote peace, when the reason for indulging your anger is most enticing.

5th. 'To forgive freely from the heart, when the power to revenge is present with you.'

You perceive a system of charitable feeling is inculcated by the laws of Mahumud; and in every-day practice it is found to be the prominent feature in their general habits. It is common with the meanest of the people to offer a share of their food to any one calling upon them at meal-time. I have seen this amiable trait of character in all classes of the people; and often on a river voyage, or a land journey, when the servants cook their dinner under a tree or by the bank of the river, if a dog, which they consider an unclean animal, advances within their reach, a portion of their food is thrown to him with that kindliness of feeling which induces them to share with the hungry, whatever gifts they receive from the Author of all good.[10] Except in seasons of famine, no one need despair of having sufficient to support nature, wherever the Mussulmauns congregate. I speak it to their credit, and in justice to their character.

[1] See p. 67.

[2] Known among Indian Musalmans as *dasaundh*, 'tithes'.

[3] *Sadaqah*, used in the Koran (ii. 265) for almsgiving. In India the term is applied to the custom by which money, clothes, grain, &c., are waved over a patient, or only shown to him, and then given away to beggars; or they are placed near the foot of a tree, on the bank of a river, or where four roads meet, and are then supposed to carry away the disease with them.—Jaffur Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, p. 252.

[4] *Imam zamini*, 'a gift to the guardian saint'. When about to go on a journey, or when any misfortune befalls a person, a coin or metal ring is tied up in a cloth coloured with turmeric, in the name of the Imam Zamin, and worn on his left arm. When the traveller reaches his destination, or gets rid of his affliction, it is taken off, and its value, with some money in addition, is spent in food or sweetmeats, which are offered in the name of the saint.—Jaffur Shurreef, p. 182.

[5] *Pak*.

[6] *Imam Zamani, Zamani tum karo*.

[7] *Munshi*, 'a writer, secretary'.

[8] *Shukr Allah*.

[9] *Bi'smi'llah*: the full form is *bi'smi'llah'r-rahmani'r-rahim*, 'In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful!' These latter titles are omitted when going into battle, or when slaughtering animals.

[10] The Prophet ordered that when a dog drinks from a vessel, it must be washed seven times, the first cleansing being with earth. But the dog of the Seven Sleepers will be admitted into Heaven.—*Koran*, xviii. 17.

LETTER XI

Mussulmaun festivals.—Buckrah Eade.—Ishmael believed to have been offered in sacrifice by Abraham and not Isaac.—Descent of the Mussulmauns from Abraham.—The Eade-gaarh.—Presentation of Nuzzas.—Elephants.—Description of the Khillaut (robe of honour).—Customs on the day of Buckrah Eade.—Nou-Roze (New Year's Day).—Manner of its celebration.—The Bussund (Spring-colour).—The Sah-bund.—Observances during this month.—Festival of the New Moon.—Superstition of the Natives respecting the influence of the

Moon.—Their practices during an eclipse.—Supposed effects of the Moon on a wound.—Medicinal application of lime in Hindoostaun.—Observance of Shubh-burraat.

An account of the Mussulmaun festivals, I imagine, deserves a Letter; for in many of them I have been able to trace, not only the habits and manners of the people with whom I was sojourning, but occasionally marks of their particular faith have been strongly developed in these observances, to most of which they attach considerable importance. Buckrah Eade, for instance, is a festival about as interesting to the Natives, as Christmas-day is to the good people of England; and the day is celebrated amongst all classes and denominations of Mussulmauns with remarkable zeal and energy.

The particular event which gives rise to Buckrah Eade[1] is the well-known circumstance of Abraham offering his son in sacrifice to God. The Mussulmauns, however, insist that the son so offered was Ishmael, and not Isaac, as our Scriptures declare. I have before remarked that I had frequent arguments with the learned men of that persuasion on this subject, which provoked a minute investigation of their most esteemed authors, to decide between our opinions. The author of 'The Hyaatool Kaaloob' advances many authorities, which the Mussulmauns deem conclusive, all of whom declare that Ishmael was the son demanded and offered in sacrifice; and two only, I think, of the many names that author quotes, were disposed to doubt whether it was Isaac or Ishmael. An evident proof, I think, that on some former occasion there had existed a difference of opinion on this subject among men of their persuasion. The result of the present inquiry, however, is that they believe Ishmael was the offering and not Isaac; whilst I remain equally convinced of the correctness of our sacred book.

The Mussulmauns, I should remark, as well as the Jews, trace their origin to Abraham, the former through Ishmael, and the latter through Isaac; and it is more than probable that to this circumstance may be attributed the decided prejudice of opinion, in favour of Ishmael being the person offered in sacrifice. Whether this be the case or not, these children of Abraham annually testify their reverence for their progenitor, and respect for his faith towards God, in the way most congenial to their particular ideas of honouring the memory of their forefathers.

I have thus attempted to sketch the origin of the festival, it shall now be my task to describe the way in which the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun celebrate Buckrah Eade.

On this day all classes of people, professing 'the faith' sacrifice animals, according to their circumstances; some offer up camels, others sheep and goats, lambs or kids. It is a day of religious veneration, and therefore by the pious prayers are added to sacrifice;—it is also a day of joyful remembrances, consequently one of festivity amongst all ranks of the Mussulmaun population.

Kings, Princes, or Nuwaubs, with the whole strength of their establishments, celebrate the event, by going in great state to an appointed place, which is designated 'The Eade-Gaarh'[2] where the animals designed for immediate sacrifice are previously conveyed.

On the arrival of the cavalcade at the Eade-gaarh, the head Moollah reads the form of prayer appointed for the occasion, and then presents the knife to the royal personage, who with his own hand sheds the blood of the camel he offers in sacrifice, repeating an impressive prayer as he presents the steel to the throat of the animal. The exact moment of the King's sacrifice is announced by signal, when a grand salute from the artillery and infantry commences the day's rejoicing.

An account of the procession on these occasions may be interesting to my readers, though no description can give an adequate idea of its imposing appearance. I have witnessed the Buckrah Eade celebrations at Lucknow, where expense and good taste are neither wanted nor spared, to do honour to the great occasion.

The several persons forming the King's suite, whether nobles or menials, together with the military, both horse and foot, are all dressed in their best apparel. The elephants have undergone a thorough cleansing in the river, their hides have been well oiled, which gives a jetty hue to the surface, and their heads painted with bright colours, according to the fancy of their keepers; their housings and trappings are the most costly and brilliant the possessors can procure, some with gold, others with silver howdahs (seats), and draperies of velvet or fine cloth embroidered and fringed with gold.

The horses of individuals, and those of the irregular troops, are, on this occasion, caparisoned with embroidered horsecloths and silver ornaments, necklaces of silver or gold; or in the absence of these costly adornings, the less affluent substitute large coloured beads and tufts of variegated silk on their horses' necks. Many of the horses have stars and crescents painted upon the chest and haunches: the tail and mane are dyed red with mayndhie.[3]

The procession is formed in the following order: Fifty camels, in pairs, carrying swivels, and each attended by two gunners and a camel-driver; the men dressed in clean white dresses, with turbans and sashes of red and green: the trappings of the camel are composed of broadcloth of the same colours. Next to these is a park of artillery, the men in new regimentals of blue, faced with red and yellow lace. Two troops of horse soldiers, in new regimentals, scarlet cloth unrurkas[4] (coats) and white trousers, with high-crowned caps of lambskin, similar to the Persian caps: these horsemen have black belts, and are armed with pistols in the holsters, a sabre and lance.

Then follows a regiment of nujeebs[5] (foot soldiers), their jackets red, with small cap turban of black leather ornamented with the kirrich[6] or dirk (part of the armorial bearings of the House of Oude): their trousers reach no lower than the hams, where they are ornamented with black points turning upwards on the white, leaving the thighs and legs perfectly bare. The dunkah[7] (kettle drums) on a horse, richly ornamented with scarlet cloth drapery, embroidered and fringed with gold, the rider dressed in scarlet and gold, with a turban to correspond, both being ornamented with the royal insignia,—a fish.[8]

The elephant carriages, containing first his Majesty and the Resident, the others conveying the Prime Minister and the favoured nobles of his Majesty's suite, form an impressive feature in the cortège, from their splendour and novelty. The King's carriage is composed chiefly of silver, open on every side, with a canopy of crimson velvet, embroidered and fringed with gold, the curtains and lining to correspond; this carriage is drawn by four elephants, exactly of one size (the rest have but two), each very richly attired in velvet and gold coverings. The King and his suite are very splendidly dressed in the Native costume. The chowries and afthaadah are flourished before him, and on each side; the royal carriage is guarded by the irregular horse in great numbers, and immediately followed by led horses, very richly caparisoned, their grooms neatly dressed in white, with turbans of red and green. To these succeed the royal naalkie,[9] a species of conveyance supported by bearers, constructed of beautifully wrought gold; the bearers in loose scarlet coats, embroidered with gold, bearing the royal insignia on their coats and turbans. A gold palkie, supported in the same style; an elegant state carriage, with eight black horses in hand, the coachman (a European) dressed in scarlet, with a cocked-hat and staff feather.

Hurkaarahs (running messengers), chobdhaahs with gold and silver staffs, are seen on either side and in front of the King's carriage, reiterating the King's titles and honours as they proceed. Then follow the English gentlemen composing the King's suite, in their court dresses, on elephants. To them succeed the Native nobility, great officers of state, &c., on many elephants,—I should think more than fifty,—and the whole followed by military, both horse and foot. The procession has an imposing effect, particularly when viewed from an open space. The regiments have each their colours unfurled, and their bands of music playing English pieces. I have often thought if our theatrical managers could witness some of these splendid processions, they might profit by representing on the stage the grand exhibition of an Eastern monarch, which loses much of its splendour by my indifferent powers of description.

After the ceremony at the Eade-gaarh has concluded, the King and his suite return in the same well-arranged order, and arriving at his palace, enters the throne-room, where being seated, he receives nuzzas in due form, presented in turn by every person belonging to the court, whether relations, nobles, courtiers, dependants, servants, or slaves; every person observing a proper etiquette in their approach to the throne, the inferiors keeping back until their superiors retire,—which each one does immediately after presenting his nuzza; thus confusion is prevented in the hall of audience.

As a description of the ceremony of presenting nuzzas, on such occasions, may be acceptable to some of my friends, I will describe that which I witnessed at the Court of Oude.

The King was seated on his throne of pure gold, dressed in a very costly habit of Persian velvet, embroidered with gold; on his neck, valuable haarhs (necklaces) of diamonds, pearls, rubies and emeralds, were suspended in many rows, reaching from the neck nearly to the waist.

The throne is a flat surface, about two yards square, raised about two feet from the floor, upon three sides of it is a railing; a square canopy, supported by poles, is attached to the four corners of the throne, which, together with the poles, are formed of wood, and cased over with pure gold, into which are set precious stones of great value. The canopy and cushions, on which the King takes his seat, are of crimson velvet, very richly embroidered with gold and pearls; a deep fringe of pearls of a good size finishes the border of the canopy. The chattah is of corresponding costly materials (crimson velvet and gold), fringed also with red pearls.

The King's crown is elegantly formed, richly studded with diamonds, and ornamented with handsome plumes of the birds of Paradise. Over his head was supported the velvet chattah. On either side of the throne stood a nobleman with chowries of peacock's-feathers in gold handles, which they kept waving continually over the King's person.

To the right of the throne were gilt chairs with velvet seats placed for the accommodation of the Resident and his lady, who were accompanied by many English ladies and gentlemen standing, as also by the European gentlemen attached to the King's suite: the latter, in their court dresses of puce cloth, richly embroidered with gold, had a very good effect, mingled with the well-dressed lady-visitors of the Resident.

To the left of the throne stood the Native gentlemen holding high offices in the Court of Oude, each richly dressed in the Asiatic costume.

At the King's feet stood the Vizier (Prime Minister), whose business it is, on such occasions, to deposit the nuzzas on the throne after they have been accepted by his Majesty.

As the company advanced the head Chamberlain announced the name and rank of each person in the presence of the King. The second Chamberlain directed such persons, after presenting the nuzza, the way they must retire from the hall.

The nuzzas of the first nobility consisted of twenty-one gold mohurs[10]; those of less exalted persons were proportioned to their rank and circumstances; whilst servants and slaves, with inferior dependants of the Court, tendered their humble tribute of respect in rupees of silver.

The person presenting has the offering placed on a clean white folded kerchief; he advances with his head bowed low, until within ten paces of the throne; he then stands erect for a few seconds, with his hands folded and held forward, after which he bows his head very low three times, and each time places his open hand to his forehead,—this is called 'salaaming'; this done, he advances to the foot of the throne, repeats the three salaams, then presents with both hands the nuzza on the kerchief, which the King touches with, his hand, and the Vizier receives and deposits with the collected heap by the side of his Majesty.

When the ceremony of presenting nuzzas has concluded, the King rises and advances with the Resident to the centre of the audience hall, where the person in charge of the haarhs[11] is in attendance with several of these marks of distinction, one of which the King selects and places with his own hands over the head of the Resident; the Resident then takes one and places it on the King in a similar way. Should the Vizier be in favour at this time, he is invested with the haarh, both by his Majesty and the Resident; but if, unfortunately for him, he does not enjoy his royal master's confidence, he takes this opportunity of testifying his dissatisfaction by omitting the favour to his Vizier. The haarh is actually of very little value but as a badge of distinction peculiar to Native courts, to which the Natives attach so much importance, that I wonder not at their anxiety to be honoured with this distinguishing mark of the King's satisfaction.

European visitors, both male and female, are generally adorned with haarhs on these occasions. The King then conducts the Resident to the entrance,—when taking leave, he pours otta[12] on his hands, with the 'Khodah Afiz!'[13] (God be with you!) and sometimes out of compliment to the Resident, his Majesty offers otta also to each of the English visitors, as they pass him at the door.

On these great court days, the Vizier's nuzza is usually of great value,—sometimes a lac of rupees has been presented, when the Vizier is much in favour, who is sure to receive ten times the value of his nuzza ere the day is passed. When this large sum is presented, the Minister has his one hundred bags (each containing a thousand rupees), covered with crimson silk, and tied with silver ribands, placed on each side the throne prior to the King's arrival; who, on seeing this proof of his faithful servant's attachment, condescends to embrace him in the presence of the assembled court—an honour of vast magnitude in the estimation of Natives.

The King confers favour on, as well as receives homage from, his subjects, on the day of Buckrah Eade. On some, titles or other distinctions are conferred; to others presents, according to his good will and pleasure: many receive khillauts; and should there be an unfortunate omission, in the distribution of princely munificence, that person understands to his sorrow, that he is out of favour, without needing to be told so by word of mouth.

The title of Khaun, Nuwaub, Rajah, or any other distinction conferred by the King, is accompanied by the dress of honour, and often by elephants, horses, or the particular kind of Native palkie which are alone used by princes and the nobility. The elephant is always given ready furnished with the several necessary appendages, as silver howdah, embroidered jhewls[14] (draperies), &c.; and the horse richly caparisoned for riding.

The naalkie and palkie are vehicles conferred on Native gentlemen with their titles, which cannot be used by any persons than those who have received the grant from their Sovereign; and there is quite as much ambition to be thus distinguished in a Native Court, as may be traced amongst the aspirants for 'the orders' in the several European states.

Though the naalkie and palkie are restricted to the use of privileged persons, all are allowed the services of the elephant. I knew a professed beggar, who made his diurnal

tour through the city of Lucknow on one. A beggar, however, in Native estimation, is not the despicable creature he is in European opinion; a degree of veneration is always evinced towards men, who live on the casual bounty of their fellow mortals, and profess not to have either a worldly calling or other means of support. The beggar, I allude to, was called Shaah Jhee[15]; he had originally been a travelling mendicant, and made a visit to Lucknow, when the late King was a young man, whom he met by accident outside the town; and, I believe, without knowing to whom he was speaking, predicted some favourable circumstances which should attend him eventually; the young prince then disclosed himself to the beggar, and promised him if his predictions were verified, he would reward him in the way he wished. Shaah Jhee left the Oude district, and travelled over most parts of Hindoostaun. Returning after many years' absence to Lucknow, he found the prince seated on the throne of his ancestors, and watching for a favourable opportunity to present himself, made his claims to the sovereign, who, remembering the circumstance and his promise, conferred the required reward—to be allowed to demand five cowries daily from every shopkeeper in the city of Lucknow. The King added to this humble demand a house to reside in, and the elephant on which he went to collect his revenue. Eighty-five cowries (shells) are valued at one pice, or a halfpenny; yet so vast is this capital of Oude, that Shaah Jhee was in the receipt of a handsome daily allowance, by this apparently trifling collection.

Most of the respectable gentlemen in Lucknow maintain an elephant for their own use, where it is almost as common to meet them as horses. Though most persons, I observe, avoid falling in with, the royal cortège, (which is always announced by the sound of the dunkah), unless they are disposed to court the King's observation; then they draw up their elephant, and oblige the animal to kneel down whilst the King passes on, the owner standing in his howdah to make salaams; others, I have seen, dismount in time, and stand in a humble posture, with the hands folded and the head bowed low, doing reverence and attracting his Majesty's notice as he passes on. These little acts of ceremonious respect are gratifying to the King, and are frequently the means of advancing the views of the subject to his favour.

The khillauts, presented by the King, vary in the number of the articles composing the gift, as well as in the quality. The personal rank, and sometimes the degree of estimation in which the receiver is held, is defined by the value and number of an individual's khillaut. I have known some gentlemen tenacious to a foible, about the nature of the khillaut that could consistently be accepted; I have heard it even expressed, 'I shall be disgraced in the eyes of the world, if my khillaut has not the full complement usually conferred on men of my rank'. It is the honour they value, not the intrinsic worth of the articles, for it is no uncommon thing to find them distributing the dress of honour amongst their dependants, on the same day they have received it.

The splendid articles composing khillauts are as follows: swords with embroidered belts, the handle and scabbard either enamelled or embossed silver, often set with precious stones; the most inferior have silver mountings and velvet scabbards; shields studded with silver; kirrich (dirk), the handle and sheath equally as rich as the swords; embroidered or gold cloth chupkunds[16] (coats); shawl-stuff labaadahs[17] (pelisses),

trimmed with sable; turbans of shawl or muslin; ornaments for the turban of diamonds and emeralds, the inferior of paste; strings of pearls and emeralds for the neck; shawls, always in pairs, of more or less value; shawl-kerchiefs; shawl cummerbunds[18] (girdles); shawl lahaafs[19] (counterpanes); gold cloth, gold and silver muslins, and shawl stuff, in pieces, each being sufficient to form a dress; Benares silks, or rich satin for trousers; pieces of fine embroidered muslin for shirts. These are the usual articles of value given in khillauts to the most exalted favourites. In some instances the King confers one hundred and one pieces in a khillaut; in others seventy-five, and down to five articles, which is the lowest number given in this much-prized dress of honour. In a khillaut of five pieces, I have observed, generally, a coarser kind of gold cloth dress, a coloured muslin turban, a pair of coarse shawls, a coarse shawl romall[20] (kerchief), and a girdle. I have also observed, that the higher the numbers rise, the quality of the articles increased in value; consequently, when we hear of any one being invested with the highest number, we calculate that each piece is of the very best quality and fabric.

When khillauts are conferred, the investiture usually takes place in the King's presence, who sometimes condescends to place one of the articles on the receiver with his own hands; at other times he merely touches the turban with his hand, and the individuals are clothed by the Prime Minister. After receiving the khillaut, each person approaches the throne and does homage to the King, presenting a nuzza in accordance with his rank, and the value of the khillaut.

The Revenue Collectors and Zemindhaars[21] (landlords of farms) crowd to the Court on these days, to testify their respect and share in the honours distributed with a liberal hand. These persons may well be solicitous to receive this badge of distinction, which they find increases their influence over the Ryotts[22] (cultivators).

On the morning of Buckrah Eade, the King gives a public breakfast at Lucknow, to the Resident and his suite, and to such of the Native nobility as are privileged to 'the chair'[23] at the royal banquets. The breakfast concluded, many varieties of sports commence, as elephant-fighting, tiger sports, &c.[24] The entertainment is got up with great magnificence, neither expense nor trouble being spared to render the festivities of the day conspicuous.

After the Resident and his party have retired, the King returns to his private apartments, where the forms of state are thrown aside with the splendid robes; and the ease and comfort of real Asiatic life is again indulged in, without the parade so studiously observed in public, as being essential to the sovereign's dignity. The trammels of state must indeed be irksome to those who indulge in that sort of luxurious ease which forms the chief comfort of Native life.

The evening at Court is passed by the King and his favourite courtiers, with music and the performances of dancing-girls; a variety of fire-work exhibitions; the witticisms of the Court-jesters, and such other amusements as are suited to Asiatic taste.

The magnificent style of celebrating Buckrah Eade at Lucknow is perhaps unequalled by any other Native Court now existing in Hindoostaun. The rejoicings on this festival are not confined to the higher classes alone; but it is a period of equal interest to every individual of the Mussulmaun community. The custom of the Court is imitated by the subjects in their several grades, each striving to do honour to the day according to their ability. The religious classes add, to their usual Namaaz, the appointed prayer for the occasion of Buckrah Eade.

The rich send presents of goats and sheep to their neighbours and to the poor, so that the meanest of the people are enabled to offer sacrifice and rejoice in the good things of which they partake: new suits of clothes are also distributed to the dependants of the family and to the poor. In short, on this day, there seems a spirit of benevolence abroad, that is even remarkable beyond the general generosity of their natural character, as all who have any thing to share will assuredly, on this occasion, impart a blessing to the needy, and gratify their friends and acquaintances.

The bride and bridegroom elect exchange presents of goats, &c.; the tutor writes a copy of verses on the day, and presents it to his pupil; the pupil in return sends his tutor a dress and money to enable him to keep Eade with his family.

The ladies dress in their most costly jewels and apparel to receive or pay visits. The children have their sports and amusements. Whenever I have entered a Native house on these days, all seemed cheerful and happy, and enjoying themselves in whatever way was most congenial to their particular tastes; 'every one must be cheerful (they say) on Buckrah Eade'.

On this day, millions of animals are sacrificed in remembrance of Abraham's faith. I have often thought how striking is the similarity between the Mosaic and Mussulmaun institutes,—indeed my recollections of Scripture history have frequently been realized in the views I have had of the domestic habits of the Mussulmauns. They are forbidden the use of unclean animals; the swine is equally abominable to Mussulmauns as to the Jews; neither are they less scrupulous in discarding from their kitchen any kind of animal food prohibited by their laws, or which has not been killed by one of their faith. In this process the person, who is to slay, turns the animal's head towards Mecca, repeats the short appointed prayer, and with one plunge the animal has ceased to feel: they are expert in the art of despatching life, so that the animal's sufferings may not be protracted unnecessarily;—an amiable trait of character and worthy of imitation.

* * * * *

'Nou-Roze'[25] (New Year's Day) is a Festival of Eade of no mean importance in the estimation of Mussulmaun society.

The exact period of commencing the Mussulmaun new year is the very moment of the sun's entering the sign Aries. This is calculated by those practical astronomers, who are in the service of most great men in Native cities;—I should tell you they have not the

benefit of published almanacks as in England,—and according to the hour of the day or night when the sun passes into that particular sign, so are they directed in the choice of a colour to be worn in their garments on this Eade: if at midnight, the colour would be dark puce, almost a black; if at mid-day, the colour would be the brightest crimson. Thus to the intermediate hours are given a shade of either colour applicable to the time of the night or the day when the sun enters the sign Aries; and whatever be the colour to suit the hour of Nou-Roze, all classes wear the day's livery, from the King to the meanest subject in the city. The King, on his throne, sits in state to receive congratulations and nuzzas from his nobles, courtiers and dependants. 'Mabaarukh Nou-Roze!'[26] (May the New Year be fortunate!) are the terms of salutation exchanged by all classes of society, the King himself setting the example. The day is devoted to amusements, a public breakfast at the palace, sending presents, exchanging visits, &c.

The trays of presents prepared by the ladies for their friends are tastefully set out, and the work of many days' previous arrangement. Eggs are boiled hard, some of these are stained in colours resembling our mottled papers; others are neatly painted in figures and devices; many are ornamented with gilding; every lady evincing her own peculiar taste in the prepared eggs for 'Nou-Roze'. All kinds of dried fruits and nuts, confectionary and cakes, are numbered amongst the necessary articles for this day's offering: they are set out in small earthen plates, lacquered over to resemble silver, on which is placed coloured paper, cut out in curious devices (an excellent substitute for vine leaves) laid on the plate to receive the several articles forming 'Nou-Roze' presents.

Amongst the young people these trays are looked forward to with child-like anxiety. The ladies rival each other in their display of novelty and good taste, both in the eatables and the manner of setting them off with effect.

The religious community have prayers read in their family, and by them it is considered both a necessary duty and a propitious commencement to bring in the new year by 'prayer and praises'.

When it is known that the Nou-Roze will occur by daylight, the ladies have a custom of watching for the moment the year shall commence by a fresh rose, which being plucked from the stalk is thrown into a basin of water, the eye downwards. They say, this rose turns over of itself towards the sun at the very moment of that luminary passing into the sign Aries. I have often found them thus engaged; but I never could say I witnessed the actual accomplishment of their prediction.

The Nou-Roze teems with friendly tokens between the two families of a bride and bridegroom elect, whose interchange of presents are also strictly observed. The children receive gifts from their elders; their nurses reap a harvest from the day; the tutor writes an ode in praise of his pupil, and receives gifts from the child's parents; the servants and slaves are regaled with dainties and with presents from the superiors of the establishment; the poor are remembered with clothes, money and food; the ladies make and receive visits; and the domenie attend to play and sing in the zeenahnah. In short, the whole day

is passed in cheerful amusements, suited to the retirement of a zeenahnah and the habits of the people.

* * * * *

There is a festival observed at Lucknow called Bussund[27] (spring-colour). I should remark here, that almost all the trees of India have perpetual foliage; as the season approaches for the new leaves to sprout, the young buds force off the old leaves; and when the trees are thus clothed in their first delicate foliage, there is a yellow tinge in the colour which is denominated Bussund (Spring). A day is appointed to be kept under this title, and then every one wears the Bussund colour: no one would be admitted at Court without this badge of the day. The elephants, horses and camels of the King, or of his nobles, are all ornamented with the same colour on their trappings.

The King holds a Court, gives a public breakfast, and exhibits sports with ferocious animals. The amusements of this day are chiefly confined to the Court: I have not observed much notice taken of it in private life.

The last month of the periodical rains is called Sahbaund.[28] There is a custom observed by the Mussulmaun population, the origin of which has never been clearly explained to me; some say it is in remembrance of the Prophet Elisha or Elijah, and commences the first Friday of Sahbaund, and is followed up every succeeding Friday through this concluding month of the rainy season.[29]

This ceremony may have had its origin with devout persons willing to honour or to invoke the Prophet Elijah, who, as our Scripture informs us, 'prayed, and the clouds gave no rain for the space of three years; and again he prayed and the heavens were opened to his prayer'. Or in that of Elisha parting the waters with the mantle of Elijah, after succeeding him in the Prophetic office, 2 Kings ii. 14; or a still more probable event, calculated to excite the pious to some such annual notice as is observed with these people, in the same chapter, the twentieth and following verses, where we find it said of Elisha, 'And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more dearth or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.'

The learned men call it a zeenahnah, or children's custom; but it is common to see children of all ages amongst the males, partake of, and enjoy the festival with as much glee as the females or their juniors.

A bamboo frame is formed to the shape of a Chinese boat: this frame-work is hidden by a covering of gold and silver tissue, silk, or coloured muslin, bordered and neatly ornamented with silver paper. In this light bark many lamps are secreted, of common earthenware. A procession is formed to convey the tribute, called 'Elias ky Kishtee[30]', to the river. The servants of the family, soldiers, and a band of Native music attend in due

order of march: the crowd attracted by this childish play is immense, increasing as they advance through the several streets on the way to the river, by all the idlers of the place.

The kishtee (boat) is launched amidst a flourish of trumpets and drums, and the shouts of the populace; the small vessel, being first well lighted, by means of the secreted lamps, moves down gently with the stream. When at a little distance, on a broad river, in the stillness of evening, any one—who did not previously know how these little moving bodies of light were produced—might fancy such fairy scenes as are to be met with in the well-told fables of children's books in happy England.

This custom, though strongly partaking of the superstitious, is not so blameable as that which I have known practised by some men of esteemed good understanding, who having a particular object in view, which they cannot attain by any human stratagem or contrivance, write petitions to the Emaum Mhidhie on Fridays, and by their own hands commit the paper to the river, with as much reverence as if they thought him present in the water to receive it. The petition is always written in the same respectful terms, as inferiors here well know how to address their superiors; and every succeeding Friday the petition is repeated until the object is accomplished, or the petitioner has no further inducement to offer one.

I have made particular inquiries whether such sensible people (as I have seen thus engaged) placed any dependence on this mode of petitioning. The only answer I have received, is, 'Those who think proper thus to petition, certainly believe that it will be effectual, if they persevere in it.'

The New Moon is a festival in the family of every good Mussulmaun.[31] They date the new moon from the evening it first become visible, and not as we do—from the moment it changes. The event is announced in Native cities by firing salutes from the field-pieces of Kings, Nuwaubs, &c.

Amongst the religious people there is much preparation in bathing and changing the dress against the evening the moon is expected to be visible, and when the guns have announced that it is visible, they have the Khoraun brought, which they open at the passage where Mahumud praises God for this particular blessing. A small looking glass is then brought, on which passage it is placed, and the book held in such a position that the moon may be first seen by the person reflected in the glass. They then repeat the prayer, expressly appointed for this occasion, and that done, the whole family rise and embrace each other, making salaams and reverence to their superiors and elders. The servants and slaves advance for the same purpose, and nothing is heard for some minutes, but 'May the new moon be fortunate!' reiterated from every mouth of the assembled family.

I cannot answer for the motives which actuate the ignorant people to bow when they first see the new moon; but the pious Mussulmaun, I am assured, bows to the Creator for the visible blessing, and not to the object.

The first eatables handed round to secure good luck and health throughout the month are sugar-candy and cheese. I fancy this is a mere zeenahnah custom, for I do not find the males so particular about eating this most extraordinary mixture as the females.

The servants' wages are paid by the month, and in well-regulated families the first day of the moon is hailed by dependants and domestics with no small share of anxiety. Indeed, these people make the moon of much more importance in the regulation of domestic affairs than the inhabitants of more polished countries, for they attribute the influence of that planet over the inhabitants of the earth in many extraordinary ways. It may be deemed superstitious, but as my business is to relate the most material ceremonies among this people, I cannot well omit noticing some of their observances at this time.

If any person is ill, and bleeding is the only good remedy to be pursued, the age of the moon is first discussed, and if it happens to be near the full, they are inflexibly resolute that the patient shall not lose blood until her influence is lessened. And should it happen at the commencement of the second quarter, or a few days after the full, the difficulty is to be overcome by deprecating the evil influence of the moon over the patient, by burning a brand of straw which is flourished about the sick person's head, who is brought out into the moon's presence for this important operation.[32] Many equally extraordinary things of this sort I have been obliged to witness in the zeenahnah.

The full moon is deemed propitious for celebrating the marriage festivals. If this be not possible, care is always to be taken that the ceremony does not fall at the period when she is in the unfavourable sign; they say the happiness of the young couple depends on this being carefully avoided, as in the opinion of every Mussulmaun 'the moon in Scorpio' is unpropitious for any business of moment.[33]

When a journey is contemplated the moon's age is the first consideration; indeed, the favourable signs of Madam Luna's movements are not only selected for commencing a journey, but for all undertakings of like importance;—whether to build, to write, to plant, to take medicine, &c.

What will be said of the singular custom, 'drinking the moon at a draught'? A silver basin being filled with water is held in such a situation that the full moon may be reflected in it; the person to be benefited by this draught is required to look steadfastly at the moon in the basin, then shut his eyes and quaff the liquid at one draught.[34] This remedy is advised by medical professors in nervous cases, and also for palpitations of the heart. I have seen this practised, but I am not aware of any real benefit derived by the patient from the prescription.

When the planet Venus is in conjunction with the moon, they say the time is most favourable to offer prayers to God for any particular object they may have in view. At this time they write charms or talismans to be worn by children. I remember having witnessed a gentleman thus occupied, who wrote little scraps in the Arabic character to distribute amongst the children of his friends, who wore them enclosed in silver cases on their arms.

An eclipse of the moon is an event of great interest, both with the Mussulmaun and the Hindoo population, although they have very opposite ideas of the causes of an eclipse.

Many of the notions entertained by the lower classes of Mussulmauns upon the nature of an eclipse are borrowed from the Hindoos.[34] Some think that it is caused by the anger of God towards the people of the earth; others say the moon is in debt, and many other equally odd conceits exist amongst the ignorant people, and among them only. Yet a sensation of awe is felt by most; and where is the intelligent creature who can view an eclipse or any other phenomenon of Nature without the same feeling of awe, although all are not equally ready to express the sensation?

Loud cries from the mixed population, Mussulmauns and Hindoos, announce the commencement of an eclipse, whether it be of the sun or the moon. The voice of the Mussulmaun is distinguished by the Namaazies'[35] call to prayers—'Allah wo uckbaar![36] (God alone is great!) To this summons the faithful attend diligently, and they are generally occupied in the form of prayer appointed by Mahumud until the shadow has passed over the sun or moon eclipsed.

The ladies prepare offerings of corn, oil, and money to be distributed amongst the poor. The gentlemen give presents to the needy. The astronomer who predicts to his royal or noble master the exact period of an eclipse, is rewarded, when it is over, with money, a dress, and a crescent of pure gold in some instances. A bride elect sends sutkah[38] to her intended husband, accompanied by a goat or kid, which must be tied to the leg of his bedstead during the continuance of an eclipse: these offerings are afterwards distributed in charity. Women expecting to become mothers are carefully kept awake during an eclipse, as they declare the infant's security depends on the mother being kept from sleep; they are not allowed to use a needle, scissors, knife, or any other instrument during an eclipse, for fear of drawing blood, which would be injurious at that period, both to the mother and child; neither are the animals in a similar state neglected; a mixture of cow-dung and drugs is rubbed over the belly of such animals, whether cows, sheep, goats, &c., and all these are securely housed until the planet is again resplendent: they fancy that both the animal and its young would be endangered by exposure during the time of the eclipse.

The power of the moon on wounded persons is believed universally to be of dangerous tendency. I have heard many extraordinary relations by people who, as they tell me, have suffered from exposure to the moon whilst a wound was fresh. One person had received a severe sabre-cut on his arm; the place was sewed up by the barber (the only surgeon amongst the Natives), and being much exhausted he laid down to sleep in the open air. The moon was near the full, and after some hours' exposure to her influence he awoke in great agony; the barber examined the arm early in the morning and found the cut in a state of corruption, the sewing having burst; the wound was cleansed, and dressed with pounded camphor; the place eventually healed, and the man lived many years to tell his story, always declaring his belief that the moon had been the cause of his sufferings; he was the more certain of this as he dreamed whilst exposed to her influence, that a large black woman (an inhabitant of the moon) had wrestled with him, and hurt his wound.

The usual application in India to a fresh wound is that of slacked lime. A man in our employ was breaking wood, the head of the hatchet came off, and the sharp edge fell with considerable force on the poor creature's foot; he bled profusely and fainted, lime was unsparingly applied, to the wound, the foot carefully wrapped up, and the man conveyed to his hut on a charpoy (bedstead), where he was kept quiet without disturbing the wound; at the end of a fortnight he walked about, and in another week returned to his labour.[39]

Lime is an article of great service in the domestic economy of the Natives. I have experienced the good effects of this simple remedy for burns or scalds: equal proportions of lime, water, and any kind of oil, made into a thin paste, and immediately applied and repeatedly moistened, will speedily remove the effects of a burn; and if applied later, even when a blister has risen, the remedy never fails: I cannot say how it might act on a wound, the consequence of a neglected burn.

The lime used with pawn by the natives of India is considered very beneficial to health; and they use it in great quantities, considering that they never eat pawn without lime, and the most moderate pawn eaters indulge in the luxury at least eight times in the course of the day. The benefit of lime is worth the consideration of the medical world—as a preventive in some climates, as a renovater in others.

Shubh-burraat,[40] is the designation of one of the months of the Mussulmauns (you are aware their month is the duration of the moon). The night of the full moon Shubh-burraat is a period of great and interesting importance to the Mussulmaun people of every degree; for on this night they are persuaded the fate of every human being is fixed in heaven; and that whatever is to be their doom is then registered in the Book of Life. Those who are to retain health, life, prosperity, or any other blessing, and those who are to be visited by sickness, sorrows, adversity or death; in short, whatever is to occur throughout the year is on this night assuredly noted in heaven for each individual on earth.

On this night they are instructed also to remember their friends and relatives who have been separated from them by death, and the injunction is followed up with much pious respect and marked veneration. Food is cooked and portioned out in the name of each departed object of their regard, over which the elder of the family,—if a Maulvee is not available,—reads a certain form of prayer called Fahteeah[41]; this done, each portion (if convenient) is conveyed to the several tombs wherein those friends are deposited; or if not convenient to send the food to the burying ground, it is distributed amongst the poor of the city and the suburbs; the beggars congregating in those places to indulge in the luxuries prepared to the memory of the dead. The food prepared on this occasion must not contain any animal food. Bread of various kinds, sweet rice, and meetah[42] (a mixture of sugar, ghee, and flour), are the usual dainties I have observed in these offerings. Fireworks are in universal request on the night of Shubh-burraat, which is required to be passed in wakefulness; and to this may be ascribed the never-varying custom of letting them off: it is an amusement these people take delight in at all times, and on this occasion most usefully, to keep them awake. The younger branches, at all events, derive this benefit from the pastime.

The religious community make it a night of strict devotion; they offer prayers and intercessions for the souls of their departed friends, since they imagine that this period, of all others, is most favourable to prayer, as they believe the heart is more open to the throne of mercy, the prayer more effectual, and that the real penitent suing for pardon on the night of Shubh-burraat, is certainly heard and his sins forgiven.

The Sheah sect attach still greater importance to this night, as the anniversary of the birth of Emaum Mhidhie.[43] They also remember Hasan and Hosein as martyrs; and in memory of their sufferings the zeearut[44] (circuit as at Mahurrum), is performed by walking round the ground in front of their apartments, repeating the burial service, with some trifling alterations; likewise the salaams to the Prophets and Emaums are duly performed during this night of fate.

There is a singular opinion current amongst the Mussulmauns, that the trees hold converse at this momentous period.[45] The really pious characters amongst the Mussulmauns declare that they discountenance superstition in every way; but they strictly adhere to every habit or custom on record which was the practice of Mahumud and his family, the Emaums. Of course, they do not think the observances of Shubh-burraat are at all bordering on superstition, whatever may be thought of the practice by others.

[1] See p. 78.

[2] 'Idgah, the place where the rites of the 'Id festival are conducted. It generally consists of a pavement, with a wall to the west, facing east.

[3] See p. 42.

[4] *Angarkha*.

[5] *Najib*, 'noble'; the half-disciplined militia of Native States.

[6] *Kirch*, a straight thrusting sword.

[7] See p. 48.

[8] See p. 43.

[9] *Nalki*, a kind of litter, the use of which was regarded as a mark of dignity: see Sleeman, *Rambles*, p. 135.

[10] A coin worth, about Rs. 16.

[11] Haarh is a name given to any sort of ornament which we should designate a necklace. The haarhs presented on these occasions at the Oude court are composed of silver ribands very prettily platted and confined at each division of plats by knobs

covered with silver riband. The prices of these haarhs are from five to twenty-five rupees each, depending on the size. [*Author*.] See p. 62.

[12] *'Itr*, essence of roses.

[13]*Khuda hafiz*.

[14] *Jhul*.

[15] *Shahji*, 'my lord'.

[16] *Chapkan*, the cassock-like frock, which is the usual dress of respectable natives.

[17] *Labada*, a sort of overcoat.

[18] *Kamarband*, 'loin-band'.

[19] *Lahaf*, a corruption of *ghilaf*, 'a wrapper'.

[20] *Rumal*, 'face-wiper'.

[21] *Zamindar*, 'a landowner'.

[22] *Ra'iyat*.

[23] Many native gentlemen are allowed to be seated in the king's presence at court daily, but not at the banquet, which is a distinction reserved only for the nobility and favourites. [*Author*.]

[24] For an account of the animal fights before Lord W. Bentinck in 1831 see Mrs. F. Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, i. 176 ff.; W. Knighton, *Private Life of an Eastern King*, p. 147 ff.

[25] *Nauroz*. Specially a Persian feast: see Sir J. Malcolm, *History of Persia*,[2] ii. 341 *n*., 404; S.G.W. Benjamin, *Persia and the Persians*, p. 198; O.J. Wills, *The Land of the Lion and the Sun*, ed. 1891, p. 48.

[26] *Nauroz mubarak*.

[27] Basant or spring feast, held at the vernal equinox.

[28] Sawan, the fourth month of the Hindu year, July-August.

[29] The feast is held in honour of the mythical Khwaja Khizr, 'the green one', a water spirit identified with the Prophet Elisha (see Sale on *Koran*, xviii. 63). The launching of

the little boats is, in essence, a form of magic intended to carry away the evils which menace the community, and to secure abundant rainfall.

[30] *Ilyas ki kishti*.

[31] This is known as Hilal.

[32] The Semites, like other races, believed in the influence of the moon. 'The sun shall not strike thee by day, nor the moon by night' (Ps. cxxi. 6). It was believed to cause blindness and epilepsy. Sir J.G. Frazer has exhaustively discussed the question of the influence of the moon. The harvest moon, in particular, brings fertility, and hears the prayers of women in travail: the moon causes growth and decay, and she is dangerous to children. Many practical rules are based on her influence at the various phases (*The Golden Bough*[3] Part I, vol. ii, p. 128; Part IV, vol. ii, p. 132 ff.).

[33] 'The sixth house is Scorpio, which is that of slaves and servants, and of diseases' (Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, tr. H. Beveridge, ii. 12).

[34] Here the moon is supposed to exert a curative influence.

[35] Hindus believe that during an eclipse the moon is being strangled by a demon, Rahu. Cries are raised, drums and brazen pans are beaten to scare him.

[36] Properly the Mu'azzin or official summoner to prayer.

[37] *Allahu akbar*.

[38] All offerings of intercession or thanksgivings are denominated sutkah [*Author*] (*sadaqah*, see p. 136).

[39] Lime liniment, composed of equal parts of lime-water and a bland oil, is recognized in surgical practice.

[40] *Shab-i-bara'at*, 'the night of record', is a feast held on the 15th of the month Sha'ban, when a vigil is kept, with prayers and illuminations. On this occasion service in memory of the deceased ancestors of the family is performed. On this night the fortunes of mortals during the coming year are said to be recorded in Heaven. See p. 51.

[41] Al-Fatihah, 'the opening one', the first chapter of the Koran.

[42] *Mitha, mithai*, 'sweetmeats'.

[43] Imam Mahdi, see pp. 72, 76.

[44] *Ziyarat*, see p. 15.

[45] Compare the oracular trees of the Greeks (Sir J.G. Frazer, *Pausanias*, ii. 160). For legends of speaking trees in India, W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of N. India*,[2] ii. 89.

LETTER XII

The Zeenahnah.—Its interior described.—Furniture, decorations, &c.—The Purdah (curtains).—Bedstead.—The Musnud (seat of honour).—Mirrors and ornamental furniture disused.—Display on occasions of festivity.—Observations on the Mussulmaun Ladies.—Happiness in their state of seclusion.—Origin of secluding females by Mahumud.—Anecdote.—Tamerlane's command prohibiting females being seen in public.—The Palankeen.—Bearers.—Their general utility and contentedness of disposition.—Habits peculiar to Mussulmaun Ladies.—Domestic arrangements of a Zeenahnah.—Dinner and its accompanying observances.—The Lota and Lugguns.—The Hookha.—Further investigation of the customs adopted in Zeenahnahs.

Before I introduce the ladies of a Mussulmaun zeenahnah to your notice, I propose giving you a description of their apartments.

Imagine to yourself a tolerably sized quadrangle, three sides of which is occupied by habitable buildings, and the fourth by kitchens, offices, lumber rooms, &c.; leaving in the centre an open court-yard. The habitable buildings are raised a few steps from the court; a line of pillars forms the front of the building, which has no upper rooms; the roof is flat, and the sides and back without windows, or any aperture through which air can be received. The sides and back are merely high walls forming an enclosure, and the only air is admitted from the fronts of the dwelling-place facing the court-yard. The apartments are divided into long halls, the extreme corners having small rooms or dark closets purposely built for the repository of valuables or stores; doors are fixed to these closets, which are the only places I have seen with them in a zeenahnah or mahul[1] (house or palace occupied by females); the floor is either of beaten earth, bricks, or stones; boarded floors are not yet introduced.

As they have neither doors nor windows to the halls, warmth or privacy is secured by means of thick wadded curtains, made to fit each opening between the pillars. Some zeenahnahs have two rows of pillars in the halls with wadded curtains to each, thus forming two distinct halls, as occasion may serve, or greater warmth be required: this is a convenient arrangement where the establishment of servants, slaves, &c., is extensive.

The wadded curtains are called purdahs[2]; these are sometimes made of woollen cloth, but more generally of coarse calico, of two colours, in patchwork style, striped, vandyked, or in some other ingeniously contrived and ornamented way, according to their individual taste.

Besides the purdahs, the openings between the pillars have blinds neatly made of bamboo strips, wove together with coloured cords: these are called jhillmuns or cheeks.[3] Many of them are painted green; others are more gaudy both in colour and variety of patterns. These blinds constitute a real comfort to every one in India, as they admit air when let down, and at the same time shut out flies and other annoying insects; besides which the extreme glare is shaded by them,—a desirable object to foreigners in particular.

The floors of the halls are first matted with the coarse date-leaf matting of the country, over which is spread shutteringhies[4] (thick cotton carpets, peculiarly the manufacture of the Upper Provinces of India, wove in stripes of blue and white, or shades of blue); a white calico carpet covers the shutteringhie, on which the females take their seat.

The bedsteads of the family are placed, during the day, in lines at the back of the halls, to be moved at pleasure to any chosen spot for the night's repose; often into the open courtyard, for the benefit of the pure air. They are all formed on one principle, differing only in size and quality; they stand about half-a-yard from the floor, the legs round and broad at bottom, narrowing as they rise towards the frame, which is laced over with a thick cotton tape, made for the purpose, and platted in checquers, and thus rendered soft, or rather elastic, and very pleasant to recline upon. The legs of these bedsteads are in some instances gold, silver gilt, or pure silver; others have enamel paintings on fine wood; the inferior grades have them merely of wood painted plain and varnished; the servants' bedsteads are of the common mango-wood without ornament, the lacing of these for the sacking being of elastic string manufactured from the fibre of the cocoa-nut.

Such are the bedsteads of every class of people. They seldom have mattresses; a soojinee[5] (white quilt) is spread on the lacing, over which a calico sheet, tied at each corner of the bedstead with cords and tassels; several thin flat pillows of beaten cotton for the head,—a muslin sheet for warm weather, and a well wadded ruzzie[6] (coverlid) for winter, is all these children of Nature deem essential to their comfort in the way of sleeping. They have no idea of night dresses; the same suit that adorns a lady, is retained both night and day, until a change be needed. The single article exchanged at night is the deputtah,[7] and that only when it happens to be of silver tissue or embroidery, for which a muslin or calico sheet is substituted.

The very highest circles have the same habits in common with the meanest, but those who can afford shawls of cashmere prefer them for sleeping in, when the cold weather renders them bearable. Blankets are never used except by the poorest peasantry, who wear them in lieu of better garments night and day in the winter season: they are always black, the natural colour of the wool. The ruzzies of the higher orders are generally made of silk of the brightest hues, well wadded, and lined with dyed muslin of assimilating colour; they are usually bound with broad silver ribands, and sometimes bordered with gold brocaded trimmings. The middling classes have fine chintz ruzzies, and the servants and slaves coarse ones of the same material; but all are on the same plan, whether for a queen or the meanest of her slaves, differing only in the quality of the material.

The mistress of the house is easily distinguished by her seat of honour in the hall of a zeenahnah; a musnud[8] not being allowed to any other person but the lady of the mansion.

The musnud carpet is spread on the floor if possible near to a pillar about the centre of the hall, and is made of many varieties of fabric,—gold cloth, quilted silk, brocaded silk, velvet, fine chintz, or whatever may suit the lady's taste, circumstances, or convenience. It is about two yards square, and generally bordered or fringed, on which is placed the all-important musnud. This article may be understood by those who have seen a lace-maker's pillow in England, excepting only that the musnud is about twenty times the size of that useful little article in the hands of our industrious villagers. The musnud is covered with gold cloth, silk, velvet, or calico, with square pillows to correspond, for the elbows, the knees, &c. This is the seat of honour, to be invited to share which, with the lady-owner, is a mark of favour to an equal or inferior: when a superior pays a visit of honour, the prided seat is usually surrendered to her, and the lady of the house takes her place most humbly on the very edge of her own carpet.

Looking-glasses or ornamental furniture are very rarely to be seen in the zeenahnahs, even of the very richest females. Chairs and sofas are produced when English visitors are expected; but the ladies of Hindoostaun prefer the usual mode of sitting and lounging on the carpet; and as for tables, I suppose not one gentlewoman of the whole country has ever been seated at one; and very few, perhaps, have any idea of their useful purposes, all their meals being served on the floor, where dusthakhawns[9] (table-cloths we should call them) are spread, but neither knives, forks, spoons, glasses, or napkins, so essential to the comfortable enjoyment of a meal amongst Europeans. But those who never knew such comforts have no desire for the indulgence, nor taste to appreciate them.

On the several occasions, amongst Native society, of assembling in large parties, as at births and marriages, the halls, although extensive, would be inadequate to accommodate the whole party. They then have awnings of white calico, neatly flounced with muslin, supported on poles fixed in the courtyard, and connecting the open space with the great hall, by wooden platforms which are brought to a line with the building, and covered with shutteringhie and white carpets to correspond with the floor-furniture of the hall; and here the ladies sit by day and sleep by night very comfortably, without feeling any great inconvenience from the absence of their bedsteads, which could never be arranged for the accommodation of so large an assemblage—nor is it ever expected.

The usually barren look of these almost unfurnished halls is on such occasions quite changed, when the ladies are assembled in their various dresses; the brilliant display of jewels, the glittering drapery of their dress, the various expressions of countenance, and different figures, the multitude of female attendants and slaves, the children of all ages and sizes in their variously ornamented dresses, are subjects to attract both the eye and the mind of an observing visitor; and the hall, which when empty appeared desolate and comfortless, thus filled, leaves nothing wanting to render the scene attractive.

The buzz of human voices, the happy playfulness of the children, the chaste singing of the domenies fill up the animated picture. I have sometimes passed an hour or two in witnessing their innocent amusements, without any feeling of regret for the brief sacrifice of time I had made. I am free to confess, however, that I have returned to my tranquil home with increased delight after having witnessed the bustle of a zeenahnah assembly. At first I pitied the apparent monotony of their lives; but this feeling has worn away by intimacy with the people, who are thus precluded from mixing generally with the world. They are happy in their confinement; and never having felt the sweets of liberty, would not know how to use the boon if it were to be granted them. As the bird from the nest immured in a cage is both cheerful and contented, so are these females. They have not, it is true, many intellectual resources, but they have naturally good understandings, and having learned their duty they strive to fulfil it. So far as I have had any opportunity of making personal observations on their general character they appear to me obedient wives, dutiful daughters, affectionate mothers, kind mistresses, sincere friends, and liberal benefactresses to the distressed poor. These are their moral qualifications, and in their religious duties they are zealous in performing the several ordinances which they have been instructed by their parents or husbands to observe. If there be any merit in obeying the injunctions of their Lawgiver, those whom I have known most intimately deserve praise, since 'they are faithful in that they profess'.

To ladies accustomed from infancy to confinement this is by no means irksome; they have their employments and their amusements, and though these are not exactly to our taste, nor suited to our mode of education, they are not the less relished by those for whom they were invented. They perhaps wonder equally at some of our modes of dissipating time, and fancy we might spend it more profitably. Be that as it may, the Mussulmaun ladies, with whom I have been long intimate, appear to me always happy, contented, and satisfied with the seclusion to which they were born; they desire no other, and I have ceased to regret they cannot be made partakers of that freedom of intercourse with the world we deem so essential to our happiness, since their health suffers nothing from that confinement, by which they are preserved from a variety of snares and temptations; besides which, they would deem it disgraceful in the highest degree to mix indiscriminately with men who are not relations. They are educated from infancy for retirement, and they can have no wish that the custom should be changed, which keeps them apart from the society of men who are not very nearly related to them. Female society is unlimited, and that they enjoy without restraint.

A lady whose friendship I have enjoyed from my first arrival in India, heard me very often speak of the different places I had visited, and she fancied her happiness very much depended on seeing a river and a bridge. I undertook to gain permission from her husband and father, that the treat might be permitted; they, however, did not approve of the lady being gratified, and I was vexed to be obliged to convey the disappointment to my friend. She very mildly answered me, 'I was much to blame to request what I knew was improper for me to be indulged in; I hope my husband and family will not be displeased with me for my childish wish; pray make them understand how much I repent of my folly. I shall be ashamed to speak on the subject when we meet.'

I was anxious to find out the origin of secluding females in the Mussulmaun societies of Hindoostaun, as I could find no example in the Mosaic law, which appears to have been the pattern Muhumud followed generally in domestic habits. I am told by the best possible authority, that the first step towards the seclusion of females occurred in the life of Mahumud, by whose command the face and figure of women were veiled on their going from home, in consequence of some departure from strict propriety in one of his wives (Ayashur,[10] the daughter of Omir); she is represented to have been a very beautiful woman, and was travelling with Mahumud on a journey in Arabia.

'The beautiful Ayashur, on her camel, was separated from the party; she arrived at the serai (inn, or halting-place) several hours after they had encamped, and declared that her delay was occasioned by the loss of a silver bangle from her ankle, which after some trouble she had discovered, and which she produced in a bruised state in testimony of her assertion. Mahumud was displeased, and her father enraged beyond measure at his daughter's exposing herself to the censure of the public, by allowing any thing to detach her from the party.' Mahumud assuaged Omir's anger by a command then first issued, 'That all females, belonging to the faithful, should be compelled to wear a close veil over their face and figure whenever they went abroad.'

In Arabia and Persia the females are allowed to walk or ride out with a sort of hooded cloak, which falls over the face, and has two eye-holes for the purpose of seeing their way.[11] They are to be met with in the streets of those countries without a suspicion of impropriety when thus habited.

The habit of strict seclusion, however, originated in Hindoostaun with Tamerlane the conqueror of India.

When Tamerlane[12] with his powerful army entered India, he issued a proclamation to all his followers to the following purport, 'As they were now in the land of idolatry and amongst a strange people, the females of their families should be strictly concealed from the view of strangers'; and Tamerlane himself invented the several covered conveyances which are to the present period of the Mussulmaun history in use, suited to each grade of female rank in society. And the better to secure them from all possibility of contamination by their new neighbours, he commanded that they should be confined to their own apartments and behind the purdah, disallowing any intercourse with males of their own persuasion even, who were not related by the nearest ties, and making it a crime in any female who should willingly suffer her person to be seen by men out of the prescribed limits of consanguinity.

Tamerlane, it may be presumed, was then ignorant of the religious principles of the Hindoos. They are strictly forbidden to have intercourse or intermarry with females who are not strictly of their own caste or tribe, under the severe penalty of losing that caste which they value as their life. To this may be attributed, in a great degree, the safety with which female foreigners travel daak[13] (post) in their palankeens, from one point of the Indian continent to another, without the knowledge of five words of the Hindoostaunie

tongue, and with no other servant or guardian but the daak-bearers, who carry them at the rate of four miles an hour, travelling day and night successively.

The palankeen is supported on the shoulders of four bearers at once,—two having the front pole attached to the vehicle, and two supporting the pole behind. The four bearers are relieved every five or six minutes by other four, making the set of eight to each palankeen,—this set conveys their burden from eight to ten miles, where a fresh party are in waiting to relieve them, and so on to the extent of the projected journey; much in the same way as relays of horses are stationed for post-travelling in England. Perhaps the tract of country passed through may not present a single hut or habitation for miles together, often through jungles of gloomy aspect; yet with all these obstacles, which would excite fear or distrust in more civilized parts of the world, females travel in India with as perfect security from insult as if they were guarded by a company of sepoys, or a troop of cavalry.

I am disposed to think that the invention of covered conveyances by Tamerlane first gave rise to the bearers. It seems so probable that the conqueror of the Hindoos should have been the first to degrade human nature, by compelling them to bear the burden of their fellow-creatures. I can never forget the first impression, on my mind, when witnessing this mode of conveyance on my landing at Calcutta; and although I am willing to agree that the measure is one of vast utility in this climate, and to acknowledge with gratitude the benefit I have derived by this personal convenience, yet I never seat myself in the palankeen or thonjaun[14] without a feeling bordering on self-reproach, as being one amongst the number to perpetuate the degradation of my fellow-mortals. They, however, feel nothing of this sentiment themselves, for they are trained from boyhood to the toil, as the young ox to the yoke. It is their business; the means of comfort is derived to them by this service; they are happy in the employment, and generally cheerful, and form a class of people in themselves respected by every other both for their services and for their general good behaviour. In the houses of foreigners they are the most useful amongst the whole establishment; they have charge of property, keep the furniture in exact order, prepare the beds, the lamps, and the candles, where wax is used. Tallow having beef-fat in its manufacture is an abomination, to the Hindoos, by whom it is considered unholy to slay, or even to touch any portion of the slaughtered cattle of their respect: for believing in transmigration, they affirm that these animals receive the souls of their departed relations. The bearers make the best of nurses to children, and contribute to the comfort of their employer by pulling the punkah night and day: in short, so necessary are these servants to the domestic economy of sojourners in the East, that their merits as a people must be a continual theme of praise; for I know not how an English establishment could be concluded with any degree of comfort without these most useful domestics. But I have allowed my pen to stray from the subject of female seclusion, and will here bring that part of my history to a close in very few words.

Those females who rank above peasants or inferior servants, are disposed from principle to keep themselves strictly from observation; all who have any regard for the character or the honour of their house, seclude themselves from the eye of strangers, carefully instructing their young daughters to a rigid observance of their own prudent example.

Little girls, when four years old, are kept strictly behind the purdah, and when they move abroad it is always in covered conveyances, and under the guardianship of a faithful female domestic, who is equally tenacious us the mother to preserve the young lady's reputation unblemished by concealing her from the gaze of men.

The ladies of zeenahnah life are not restricted from the society of their own sex; they are, as I have before remarked, extravagantly fond of company, and equally as hospitable when entertainers. To be alone is a trial to which they are seldom exposed, every lady having companions amongst her dependants; and according to her means the number in her establishment is regulated. Some ladies of rank have from two to ten companions, independent of slaves and domestics; and there are some of the Royal family at Lucknow who entertain in their service two or three hundred female dependants, of all classes. A well-filled zeenahnah is a mark of gentility; and even the poorest lady in the country will retain a number of slaves and domestics, if she cannot afford companions; besides which they are miserable without society, the habit of associating with numbers having grown up with infancy to maturity: 'to be alone' is considered, with women thus situated, a real calamity.

On occasions of assembling in large parties, each lady takes with her a companion besides two or three slaves to attend upon her, no one expecting to be served by the servants of the house at which they are visiting. This swells the numbers to be provided for; and as the visit is always for three days and three nights (except on Eades, when the visit is confined to one day), some forethought must be exercised by the lady of the house, that all may be accommodated in such a manner as may secure to her the reputation of hospitality.

The kitchen and offices to the zeenahnah, I have remarked, occupy one side of the quadrangle; they face the great or centre hall appropriated to the assembly. These kitchens, however, are sufficiently distant to prevent any great annoyance from the smoke;—I say smoke, because chimneys have not yet been introduced into the kitchens of the Natives. The fire-places are all on the ground, something resembling stoves, each admitting one saucepan, the Asiastic style of cooking requiring no other contrivance. Roast or boiled joints are never seen at the dinner of a Native: a leg of mutton or sirloin of beef would place the hostess under all sorts of difficulties, where knives and forks are not understood to be amongst the useful appendages of a meal. The variety of their dishes are countless, but stews and curries are the chief; all the others are mere varieties. The only thing in the shape of roast meats, are small lean cutlets bruised, seasoned and cemented with pounded poppy-seed, several being fastened together on skewers: they are grilled or roasted over a charcoal fire spread on the ground, and then called keebaab,[15] which word implies, roast meat.

The kitchen of a zeenahnah would be inadequate to the business of cooking for a large assembly; the most choice dishes only (for the highly favoured guests), are cooked by the servants of the establishment. The needed abundance required on entertaining a large party is provided by a regular bazaar cook, several of whom establish themselves in Native cities, or wherever there is a Mussulmaun population. Orders being previously

given, the morning and evening dinners are punctually forwarded at the appointed hours in covered trays, each tray having portions of the several good things ordered, so that there is no confusion in serving out the feast on its arrival at the mansion. The food thus prepared by the bazaar cook (naunbye,[16] he is called), is plain boiled-rice, sweet-rice, kheer[17] (rice-milk), mautungun[18] (rice sweetened with the addition of preserved fruits, raisins, &c., coloured with saffron), sallons[19] (curries) of many varieties, some cooked with vegetables, others with unripe fruits with or without meat; pillaus of many sorts, keebaabs, preserves, pickles, chatnees, and many other things too tedious to admit of detail.

The bread in general use amongst Natives is chiefly unleavened; nothing in the likeness of English bread is to be seen at their meals; and many object to its being fermented with the intoxicating toddy (extracted from a tree). Most of the Native bread is baked on iron plates over a charcoal fire. They have many varieties, both plain and rich, and some of the latter resembles our pastry, both in quality and flavour.

The dinners, I have said, are brought into the zeenahnah ready dished in the Native earthenware, on trays; and as they neither use spoons or forks, there is no great delay in setting out the meal where nothing is required for display or effect, beyond the excellent quality of the food and its being well cooked. In a large assembly all cannot dine at the dustha-khawn of the lady-hostess, even if privileged by their rank; they are, therefore, accommodated in groups of ten, fifteen, or more, as may be convenient; each lady having her companion at the meal, and her slaves to brush off the intruding flies with a chowrie, to hand water, or to fetch or carry any article of delicacy from or to a neighbouring group. The slaves and servants dine in parties after their ladies have finished, in any retired corner of the court-yard—always avoiding as much as possible the presence of their superiors.

Before any one touches the meal, water is carried round for each lady to wash the hand and rinse the mouth. It is deemed unclean to eat without this form of ablution, and the person neglecting it would he held unholy; this done, the lady turns to her meal, saying, 'Bis ma Allah!'—(In the name or to the praise of God!) and with the right hand conveys the food to her mouth, (the left is never used at meals)[20]; and although they partake of every variety of food placed before them with no other aid than their fingers, yet the mechanical habit is so perfect, that they neither drop a grain of rice, soil the dress, nor retain any of the food on their fingers. The custom must always be offensive to a foreign eye, and the habit none would wish to copy; yet every one who witnesses must admire the neat way in which eating is accomplished by these really 'children of Nature'.

The repast concluded, the lota[21] (vessel with water), and the luggun[22] (to receive the water in after rinsing the hands and mouth), are passed round to every person, who having announced by the 'Shuggur Allah!'—All thanks to God!—that she has finished, the attendants present first the powdered peas, culled basun,[23]—which answers the purpose of soap in removing grease, &c., from the fingers,—and then the water in due course. Soap has not even yet been brought into fashion by the Natives, except by the washermen; I have often been surprised that they have not found the use of soap a

necessary article in the nursery, where the only substitute I have seen is the powdered pea.

Lotas and lugguns are articles in use with all classes of people; they must be poor indeed who do not boast of one, at least, in their family. They are always of metal, either brass, or copper lacquered over, or zinc; in some cases, as with the nobility, silver and even gold are converted into these useful articles of Native comfort.

China or glass is comparatively but little used; water is their only beverage, and this is preferred, in the absence of metal basins, out of the common red earthen katorah[24] (cup shaped like a vase).

China dishes, bowls, and basins, are used for serving many of the savoury articles of food in; but it is as common in the privacy of the palace, as well as in the huts of the peasantry, to see many choice things introduced at meals served up in the rude red earthen platter; many of the delicacies of Asiatic cookery being esteemed more palatable from the earthen flavour of the new vessel in which it is served.

I very well remember the first few days of my sojourn at Lucknow, feeling something bordering on dissatisfaction, at the rude appearance of the dishes containing choice specimens of Indian cookery, which poured in (as is customary upon fresh arrivals) from the friends of the family I had become a member of. I fancied, in my ignorance, that the Mussulmaun people perpetuated their prejudices even to me, and that they must fear I should contaminate their china dishes; but I was soon satisfied on this point: I found, by experience, that brown earthen platters were used by the nobility from choice; and in some instances, the viand would have wanted its greatest relish if served in China or silver vessels. Custom reconciles every thing: I can drink a draught of pure water now from the earthen katorah of the Natives with as much pleasure as from a glass or a silver cup, and feel as well satisfied with their dainties out of an earthen platter, as when conveyed in silver or China dishes.

China tea sets are very rarely found in the zeenahnah; tea being used by the Natives more as a medicine than a refreshment, except by such gentlemen as have frequent intercourse with the 'Sahib Logue' (English gentry), among whom they acquire a taste for this delightful beverage. The ladies, however, must have a severe cold to induce them to partake of the beverage even as a remedy, but by no means as a luxury.[25] I imagined that the inhabitants of a zeenahnah were sadly deficient in actual comforts, when I found, upon my first arrival in India, that there were no preparations for breakfast going forward: every one seemed engaged in pawn eating, and smoking the hookha, but no breakfast after the morning Namaaz. I was, however, soon satisfied that they felt no sort of privation, as the early meal so common in Europe has never been introduced in Eastern circles. Their first meal is a good substantial dinner, at ten, eleven, or twelve o'clock, after which follow pawn and the hookha; to this succeeds a sleep of two or three hours, providing it does not impede the duty of prayer;—the pious, I ought to remark, would give up every indulgence which would prevent the discharge of this duty. The second

meal follows in twelve hours from the first, and consists of the same substantial fare; after which they usually sleep again until the dawn of day is near at hand.

It is the custom amongst Natives to eat fruit after the morning sleep, when dried fruits, confectionery, radishes, carrots, sugar-cane, green peas, and other such delicacies, are likewise considered wholesome luxuries, both with the ladies and the children. A dessert immediately after dinner is considered so unwholesome, that they deem our practice extremely injudicious. Such is the difference of custom; and I am disposed to think their fashion, in this instance, would be worth imitating by Europeans whilst residing in India.

I have been much amused with the curious inquiries of a zeenahnah family when the gardener's dhaullie is introduced. A dhaullie,[26] I must first tell you, is a flat basket, on which is arranged, in neat order, whatever fruit, vegetables, or herbs are at the time in season, with a nosegay of flowers placed in the centre. They will often ask with wonder—'How do these things grow?'—'How do they look in the ground?'—and many such child-like remarks have I listened to with pity, whilst I have relieved my heart by explaining the operations of Nature in the vegetable kingdom, a subject on which they are perfectly ignorant, and, from the habits of seclusion in which they live, can never properly be made to understand or enjoy.

I have said water is the only beverage in general use amongst the Mussulmaun Natives. They have sherbet, however, as a luxury on occasions of festivals, marriages, &c. This sherbet is simply sugar and water, with a flavour of rose-water, or kurah[27] added to it.

The hookha is almost in general use with females. It is a common practice with the lady of the house to present the hookha she is smoking to her favoured guest. This mark of attention is always to be duly appreciated; but such is the deference paid to parents, that a son can rarely be persuaded by an indulgent father or mother to smoke a hookha in their revered presence;—this praiseworthy feeling originates not in fear, but real genuine respect. The parents entertain for their son the most tender regard; and the father makes him both his companion and his friend; yet the most familiar endearments do not lessen the feeling of reverence a good son entertains for his father. This is one among the many samples of patriarchal life, my first Letter alluded to, and which I can never witness in real life, without feeling respect for the persons who follow up the patterns I have been taught to venerate in our Holy Scripture.

The hookha, as an indulgence of a privilege, is a great definer of etiquette. In the presence of the King or reigning Nuwaub, no subject, however high he may rank in blood or royal favour, can presume to smoke. In Native courts, on state occasions, hookhas are presented only to the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, or the Resident at his Court, who are considered equals in rank, and therefore entitled to the privilege of smoking with him; and they cannot consistently resist the intended honour. Should they dislike smoking, a hint is readily understood by the hookha-bahdhaar[28] to bring the hookha, charged with the materials, without the addition of fire. Application of the munall[29] (mouth-piece) to the month indicates a sense of the honour conferred.

[1] *Mahall.*

[2] *Parda.*

[3] *Jhilmil, chiq,* the Anglo-Indian 'chick'.

[4] *Shatranji,* see p. 19.

[5] *Sozani* (*sozan,* 'a needle'), an embroidered quilt.

[6] *Razai,* a counterpane padded with cotton.

[7] *Dopatta,* a double sheet: see p. 26.

[8] See p. 24.

[9] *Dastarkhwan,* see p. 108.

[10] 'Ayishah, daughter of Abubakr, third and best loved wife of the Prophet, though she bore him no child. The tale of the scandal about her is historical, but it is treated as a calumny (*Koran,* xxiv. II, 22, with Sale's note).

[11] Known as the *burqa.*

[12] Amir Taimur, known as Taimur Lang, 'the lame', was born A.D. 1336; ascended the throne at Balkh, 1370; invaded India and captured Delhi, 1398; died 1405, and was buried at Samarkand. There seems to be no evidence that he introduced the practice of the seclusion of women, an ancient Semitic custom, which, however, was probably enforced on the people of India by the brutality of foreign invaders.

[13] *Dak.*

[14] See p. 32.

[15] *Kabab,* properly, small pieces of meat roasted on skewers.

[16] *Nanbai,* a baker of bread *(nan).*

[17] *Khir,* milk boiled with rice, sugar, and spices.

[18] *Mutanjan,* a corruption of *muttajjan,* 'fried in a pan'; usually in the form *mutanjan pulao,* meat boiled with rice, sugar, butter, and sometimes pine-apples or nuts.

[19] *Salan,* a curry of meat, fish, or vegetables.

[20] The left hand is used for purposes of ablution.

[21] The Musalman *lota*, properly called *badhna*, differs from that used by Hindus in having a spout like that of a teapot.

[22] *Lagan*, a brass or copper pan in which the hands are washed: also used for kneading dough.

[23] *Besan*, flour, properly that of gram (*chana*). The prejudice against soap is largely due to imitation of Hindus, who believe themselves to be polluted by fat. Arabs, after a meal, wash their hands and mouths with soap (Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 257). Sir G. Watt (*Economic Dictionary*, iii. 84 ff.) gives a long list of other detergents and substitutes for soap.

[24] *Katora*.

[25] The prejudice against the use of tea has much decreased since this book was written, owing to its cultivation in India. Musalmans and many Hindus now drink it freely.

[26] *Dali*, the 'dolly' of Anglo-Indians.

[27] See p. 13.

[28] *Huqqahbardar*.

[29] *Munhnal*.

LETTER XIII

Plurality of wives.—Mahumud's motive for permitting this privilege.—State of society at the commencement of the Prophet's mission.—His injunctions respecting marriage.—Parents invariably determine on the selection of a husband.—First marriages attended by a public ceremony.—The first wife takes precedence of all others.—Generosity of deposition evinced by the Mussulmaun ladies.—Divorces obtained under certain restrictions.—Period of solemnizing marriage.—Method adopted in choosing a husband or wife.—Overtures and contracts of marriage, how regulated.—Mugganee, the first contract.—Dress of the bride elect on this occasion.—The ceremonies described as witnessed.—Remarks on the bride.—Present from the bridegroom on Buckrah Eade.

The Mussulmauns have permission from their Lawgiver to be pluralists in wives, as well as the Israelites of old.[1] Mahumud's motive for restricting the number of wives each man might lawfully marry, was, say his biographers, for the purpose of reforming the

then existing state of society, and correcting abuses of long standing amongst the Arabians.

My authority tells me, that at the period of Mahumud's commencing his mission, the Arabians were a most abandoned and dissolute people, guilty of every excess that can debase the character of man: drunkards, profligate, and overbearing barbarians, both in principle and action. Mahumud is said unvariedly to have manifested kindly feelings towards the weaker sex, who, he considered, were intended to be the companion and solace of man, and not the slave of his ungovernable sensuality or caprice; he set the best possible example in his own domestic circle, and instituted such laws as were then needed to restrain vice and promote the happiness of those Arabians who had received him as a Prophet. He forbade all kinds of fermented liquors, which were then in common use; and to the frequent intoxication of the men, were attributed their vicious habits, base pursuits, and unmanly cruelty to the poor females. Mahumud's code of laws relating to marriage restricted them to a limited number of wives; for at that period they all possessed crowded harems, many of the inhabitants of which were the victims of their reckless persecution; young females torn from the bosom of their families and immured in the vilest state of bondage, to be cast out upon the wide world to starvation and misery, whenever the base master of the house or tent desired to make room for a fresh supply, often the spoils of his predatory excursions.

By the laws of Mahumud his followers are restrained from concubinage; they are equally restricted from forced marriages. The number of their wives must be regulated by their means of supporting them, the law strictly forbidding neglect, or unkind treatment of any one of the number his followers may deem it convenient to marry.

At the period when Mahumud issued these necessary laws for the security of female comfort and the moral habits of the males, there existed a practice with the Arabs of forcing young women to marry against their inclination, adding, year by year, to the many wretched creatures doomed, for a time, to all the miseries of a crowded hut; and at last, when tired of their persons or unable to provide them with sustenance, turning them adrift without a home, a friend, or a meal. To the present day the law against forced marriages is revered, and no marriage contract can be deemed lawful without the necessary form of inquiry by the Maulvee, who, in the presence of witnesses, demands of the young lady, 'whether the contract is by her own free will and consent?' This, however, I am disposed to think, in the present age, is little else than a mere form of 'fulfilling the law' since the engagement is made by the parents of both parties, the young couple being passive subjects to the parental arrangement, for their benefit as they are assured. The young lady, from her rigid seclusion, has no prior attachment, and she is educated to be 'obedient to her husband'. She is taught from her earliest youth to look forward to such match as her kind parents may think proper to provide for her; and, therefore, can have no objection to accepting the husband selected for her by them. The parents, loving their daughter, and aware of the responsibility resting on them, are cautious in selecting for their girls suitable husbands, according to their particular view of the eligibility of the suitor.

The first marriage of a Mussulmaun is the only one where a public display of the ceremony is deemed necessary, and the first wife is always considered the head of his female establishment. Although he may be the husband of many wives in the course of time, and some of them prove greater favourites, yet the first wife takes precedence in all matters where dignity is to be preserved. And when the several wives meet—each have separate habitations if possible—all the rest pay to the first wife that deference which superiority exacts from inferiors; not only do the secondary wives pay this respect to the first, but the whole circle of relations and friends make the same distinction, as a matter of course; for the first wife takes precedence in every way.

Should the first wife fortunately present her husband with a son, he is the undisputed heir; but the children of every subsequent wife are equals in the father's estimation. Should the husband be dissolute and have offspring by concubines—which is not very common,—those children are remembered and provided for in the distribution of his property; and, as very often occurs, they are cherished by the wives with nearly as much care as their own children; but illegitimate offspring very seldom marry in the same rank their father held in society.

The latitude allowed by 'the law' preserves the many-wived Mussulmaun from the world's censure; and his conscience rests unaccused when he adds to his numbers, if he cannot reproach himself with having neglected or unkindly treated any of the number bound to him, or their children. But the privilege is not always indulged in by the Mussulmauns; much depends on circumstances, and more on the man's disposition. If it be the happy lot of a kind-hearted, good man to be married to a woman of assimilating mind, possessing the needful requisites to render home agreeable, and a prospect of an increasing family, then the husband has no motive to draw him into further engagements, and he is satisfied with one wife. Many such men I have known in Hindoostaun, particularly among the Syaads and religious characters, who deem a plurality of wives a plague to the possessors in proportion to their numbers.

The affluent, the sensualist, and the ambitious, are most prone to swell the numbers in their harem. With some men, who are not highly gifted intellectually, it is esteemed a mark of gentility to have several wives.

There are some instances of remarkable generosity in the conduct of good wives (which would hardly gain credit with females differently educated), not necessary to the subject before me; but I may here add to the praise of a good wife among these people, that she never utters a reproach, nor gives evidence by word or manner in her husband's presence that she has any cause for regret; she receives him with undisguised pleasure, although she has just before learned that another member has been added to his well-peopled harem. The good and forbearing wife, by this line of conduct, secures to herself the confidence of her husband; who, feeling assured that the amiable woman has an interest in his happiness, will consult her and take her advice in the domestic affairs of his children by other wives, and even arrange by her judgment all the settlements for their marriages, &c. He can speak of other wives without restraint,—for she knows he has others,—and her education has taught her, that they deserve her respect in proportion as

they contribute to her husband's happiness. The children of her husband are admitted at all times and seasons, without restraint or prejudice; she loves them next to her own, because they are her husband's. She receives the mothers of such children without a shade of jealousy in her manner, and delights in distinguishing them by favours and presents according to their several merits. From this picture of many living wives in Mussulmaun society, it must not be supposed I am speaking of women without attachment to their husbands; on the contrary, they are persons who are really susceptible of pure love, and the generosity of their conduct is one of the ways in which they prove themselves devoted to their husband's happiness. This, they say, was the lesson taught them by their amiable mother, and this is the example they would set for the imitation of their daughters.

I do not mean to say this is a faithful picture of all the females of zeenahnah life. The mixture of good and bad tempers or dispositions is not confined to any class or complexion of people, but is to be met with in every quarter of the globe. In general, I have observed those females of the Mussulmaun population who have any claim to genteel life, and whose habits are guided by religious principles, evince such traits of character as would constitute the virtuous and thoroughly obedient wife in any country; and many, whom I have had the honour to know personally, would do credit to the most enlightened people in the world.

Should the first wife prove a termagant or unfaithful—rare occurrences amongst the inmates of the harem,—the husband has the liberty of divorcing her by paying down her stipulated dowry. This dowry is an engagement made by the husband on the night of Baarraat[2] (when the bridegroom is about to take his bride from her parents to his own home). On which occasion the Maulvee asks the bridegroom to name the amount of his wife's dowry, in the event of separation; the young man is at liberty to name any sum he pleases. It would not prevent the marriage if the smallest amount were promised; but he is in the presence of his bride's family, and within her hearing also, though he has not yet seen her;—it is a critical moment for him, thus surrounded. Besides, as he never intends to separate from the lady, in the strict letter of the law, he cannot refrain from gratifying those interested in the honour he is about to confer by the value of the promised dowry, and, therefore, he names a very heavy sum, which perhaps his whole generation never could have collected in their joint lives. This sum would of itself be a barrier to divorce; but that is not the only object which influences the Mussulmaun generally to waive the divorce; it is because they would not publish their own disgrace, by divorcing an unfaithful or undutiful wife.

If the first wife dies, a second is sought after on the same principle which guided the first—'a superior to head his house'. In this case there would be the same public display which marked the first wife's marriage; all the minor or secondary wives being introduced to the zeenahnah privately; they are in consequence termed Dhollie[3] wives, or brought home under cover.

Many great men appear to be close imitators of King Solomon, with whose history they are perfectly conversant, for I have heard of the sovereign princes in Hindoostaun having

seven or eight hundred wives at one time in their palaces. This is hearsay report only, and I should hope an exaggeration.[4]

The first marriage is usually solemnized when the youth is eighteen, and the young lady thirteen, or fourteen at the most; many are married at an earlier age, when, in the opinion of the parents, an eligible match is to be secured. And in some cases, where the parents on both sides have the union of their children at heart, they contract them at six or seven years old, which marriage they solemnly bind themselves to fulfil when the children have reached a proper age; under these circumstances the children are allowed to live in the same house, and often form an attachment for each other, which renders their union a life of real happiness.

There are to be found in Mussulmaun society parents of mercenary minds, who prefer giving their daughters in marriage as dhollie wives to noblemen or men of property, to the preferable plan of uniting them with a husband of their own grade, with whom the girl would most likely live without a rival in the mud-walled tenement; this will explain the facilities offered to a sovereign or nobleman in extending the numbers of his harem.

Some parents excuse themselves in thus disposing of their daughters on the score of poverty, and the difficulty they find in defraying the expenses of a wedding: this I conceive to be one great error in the economy of the Mussulmaun people,—unnecessary expense incurred in their marriage ceremonies, which hampers them through life in their circumstances. Parents, however poor, will not allow their daughter to be conveyed from their home, where the projected union is with an equal, without a seemingly needless parade of music, and a marriage-portion in goods and chattels, if they have no fortune to give beside; then the expense of providing dinners for friends to make the event conspicuous, and the useless articles of finery for the girl's person, with many other ways of expending money, to the detriment of the parents' finances, without any very substantial benefit to the young couple. But this dearly-loved custom cannot be passed over; and if the parents find it impossible to meet the pecuniary demands of these ceremonies, the girl has no alternative but to live out her days singly, unless by an agent's influence she is accepted as a dhollie wife to some man of wealth.

Girls are considered to have passed their prime when they number from sixteen to eighteen years; even the poorest peasant would object to a wife of eighteen.

There has been the same difficulty to encounter in every age of Mussulmaun history in Hindoostaun; and in the darker periods of civilization, the obstacles to settling their daughters to advantage induced the villagers and the uneducated to follow the example of the Rajpoots, viz., to destroy the greater proportion of females at their birth. In the present age, this horrid custom is never heard of amongst any classes of the Mussulmaun population[5]; but by the Rajpoot Hindoos it is still practised, as one of their chiefs very lately acknowledged in the presence of a friend of mine. I have often heard Meer Hadjee Shaah declare that it was a common occurrence within his recollection, among the lower classes of the people in the immediate vicinity of Loodeeanah,[6] where he lived when a boy; and that the same practice existed in the Oude territory, amongst the peasantry even

at a much later date. One of the Nuwaubs of Oude,—I think Asoof ood Dowlah,—hearing with horror of the frequent recurrence of this atrocity in the remote parts of his province, issued a proclamation to his subjects, commanding them to desist from the barbarous custom[7]; and, as an inducement to the wicked parents to preserve their female offspring alive, grants of land were to be awarded to every female as a marriage-portion on her arriving at a proper age.

It is generally to be observed in a Mussulmaun's family, even at this day, that the birth of a girl produces a temporary gloom, whilst the birth of a boy gives rise to a festival in the zeenahnah. Some are wicked enough to say, 'It is more honourable to have sons than daughters', but I believe the real cause is the difficulty to be encountered in settling the latter suitably.

The important affair of fixing upon a desirable match for their sons and daughters is the source of constant anxiety in the family of every Mussulmaun, from the children's earliest years to the period of its accomplishment.

There is a class of people who make it the business of their lives to negotiate marriages. Both men and women of this description are of course ingeniously expert in the art of talking, and able to put the best colouring on the affair they undertake; they occupy every day of their lives in roving about from house to house, and, as they have always something entertaining to say, they generally gain easy admittance; they make themselves acquainted with the domestic affairs of one family in order to convey them to another, and so continue in their line of gossiping, until the economy of every person's house is familiar to all. The female gossip in her researches in zeenahnahs, finds out all the expectations a mother entertains for her marriageable sons or daughters, and details whatever she learns in such or such a zeenahnah, as likely to meet the views of her present hostess. Every one knows the object of these visits, and if they have any secret that the world may not participate in, there is due caution observed that it may not transpire before this Mrs. Gad-about.

When intelligence is brought, by means of such agency, to the mother of a son who happens to be marriageable, that a lady of proper rank has a daughter to be sought, she consults with her husband, and further inquiries are instituted amongst their several friends, male and female; after due deliberation, the connexion being found desirable, the father will consult an omen before negotiations are commenced. The omen to decide the important step is as follows:—Several slips of paper are cut up, on half the number is written 'to be', on the other half, 'not to be'; these papers are mixed together and placed under the prayer-carpet. When the good Mussulmaun is preparing for his evening Namaaz he fails not in his devotions to ask for help and guidance in an affair of so much importance to the father as the happiness and well-being of his son. At the portion of the service when he bows down his head to God, he beseeches with much humility, calling on the great power and goodness of God to instruct and guide him for the best interest of his child; and then he repeats a short prayer expressive of his reliance on the wisdom of God, and his perfect submission to whatever may be His wise decree in this important business. The prayer concluded, he seats himself with solemn gravity on the prayer-

carpet, again and again imploring Divine guidance, without which he is sure nothing good can accrue: he then draws one slip from under his carpet; if 'to be' is produced, he places it by his left side;—a second slip is drawn out, should that also bear the words 'to be' the business is so far decided. He then offers thanks and praises to God, congratulates his wife on the successful issue of the omen, and discusses those plans which appear most likely to further the prospects of their dearly-loved son. But should the second and third papers say 'not to be' he is assured in his heart it was so decided by 'that Wisdom which cannot err:' to whom he gives praise and glory for all mercies received at His hand: after this no overture or negotiation would be listened to by the pious father from the same quarter.[8]

The omen, however, proving favourable, the affair is decided; and in order to gain the best possible information of the real disposition of all parties concerned, a confidential friend is sent to the zeenahnah of the young lady's mother to make her own observations on what passes within; and to ascertain, if possible, whether the report brought by the female agent was true or exaggerated; and finally, to learn if their son would be received or rejected as a suitor, provided advances were made.

The female friend returns, after a day or two's absence, to the anxious parents of the youth, and details all she has seen or heard during her visit. The young lady may, perhaps, have been seen (this is not always conceded to such visitors), in which case her person, her manners, her apparent disposition, the hospitality and good breeding of the mother and other members of the zeenahnah, are described; and lastly, it is hinted that, all other things suiting, the young lady being yet disengaged, the projected offer would not be disagreeable to her parents.

The father of the youth then resolves on sending a male agent in due form to negotiate a marriage, unless he happens to be personally acquainted with the girl's father; in which case the lady is desired to send her female agent on the embassy, and the father of the youth speaks on the subject in the meantime to the girl's father.

A very intimate friend of mine was seeking for a suitable match for her son, and being much in her confidence, I was initiated in all the mysteries and arrangements (according to Mussulmaun rule) of the affair pending the marriage of her son.

The young lady to be sought (wooed we should have it), had been described as amiable and pretty—advantages as much esteemed as her rank;—fortune she had none worth mentioning, but it was what is termed in Indian society a good and equal match. The overture was, therefore, to be made from the youth's family in the following manner:

On a silver tray covered with gold brocade and fringed with silver, was laid the youth's pedigree, traced by a neat writer in the Persian character, on richly embossed paper ornamented and emblazoned with gold figures. The youth being a Syaad, his pedigree was traced up to Mahumud, in both paternal and maternal lines, and many a hero and Begum of their noble blood filled up the space from the Prophet down to the youthful Meer Mahumud, my friend's son.

On the tray, with the pedigree, was laid a nuzza, or offering of five gold mohurs, and twenty-one (the lucky number) rupees; a brocaded cover, fringed with silver, was spread over the whole, and this was conveyed by the male agent to the young Begum's father. The tray and its contents are retained for ever, if the proposal is accepted: if rejected, the parties return the whole without delay, which is received as a tacit proof that the suitor is rejected: no further explanation is ever given or required.

In the present instance the tray was detained, and in a few days after a female from their family was sent to my friend's house to make a general scrutiny of the zeenahnah and its inmates. This female was pressed to stay a day or two, and in that time many important subjects underwent discussion. The youth was introduced, and everything according with the views entertained by both parties, the fathers met, and the marriage, it was decided, should take place within a twelvemonth, when the young lady would have accomplished her thirteenth year.

'Do you decide on having Mugganee[9] performed?' is the question proposed by the father of the youth to the father of the young maiden. In the present case it was chosen, and great were the preparations of my friend to do all possible honour to the future bride of her son.

Mugganee is the first contract, by which the parties are bound to fulfil their engagement at an appointed time.

The dress for a bride[10] differs in one material point from the general style of Hindoostaunie costume: a sort of gown is worn, made of silver tissue, or some equally expensive article, about the walking length of an English dress; the skirt is open in front, and contains about twenty breadths of the material, a tight body and long sleeves. The whole dress is trimmed very richly with embroidered trimming and silver riband; the deputtah (drapery) is made to correspond. This style of dress is the original Hindoo fashion, and was worn at the Court of Delhi for many centuries; but of late years it has been used only on marriage festivals amongst the better sort of people in Hindoostaun, except Kings or Nuwaubs sending khillauts to females, when this dress, called a jhammah,[11] is invariably one of the articles.

The costly dresses for the present Mugganee my friend prepared at a great expense, and with much good taste; to which were added a ruby ring of great value, large gold ear-rings, offerings of money, the flower-garlands for the head, neck, wrists, and ankles, formed of the sweet-scented jessamine; choice confectionery set out in trays with the pawns and fruits; the whole conveyed under an escort of soldiers and servants with a band of music, from the residence of Meer Mahumud to that of his bride elect, accompanied by many friends of the family. These offerings from the youth bind the contract with the young lady, who wears his ring from that day to the end of her life.

The poorer sort of people perform Mugganee by the youth simply sending a rupee in a silk band, to be tied on the girl's arm.

Being curious to know the whole business of a wedding ceremony amongst the Mussulmaun people, I was allowed to perform the part of 'officiating friend' on this occasion of celebrating the Mugganee. The parents of the young lady having been consulted, my visit was a source of solicitude to the whole family, who made every possible preparation to receive me with becoming respect; I went just in time to reach the gate at the moment the parade arrived. I was handed to the door of the zeenahnah by the girl's father, and was soon surrounded by the young members of the family, together with many lady-visitors, slaves, and women-servants of the establishment. They had never before seen an English-woman, and the novelty, I fancy, surprised the whole group; they examined my dress, my complexion, hair, hands, &c., and looked the wonder they could not express in words. The young Begum was not amongst the gazing throng; some preliminary customs detained her behind the purdah, where it may be supposed she endured all the agony of suspense and curiosity by her compliance with the prescribed forms.

The lady of the mansion waited my approach to the dulhaun[12] (great hall) with all due etiquette, standing to receive and embrace me on my advancing towards her. This ceremony performed, I was invited to take a seat on the musnud-carpet with her on the ground; a chair had been provided for me, but I chose to respect the lady's preference, and the seat on the floor suited me for the time without much inconvenience.

After some time had been passed in conversation on such subjects as suited the taste of the lady of the house, I was surprised at the servants entering with trays, which they placed immediately before me, containing a full-dress suit in the costume of Hindoostaun. The hostess told me she had prepared this dress for me, and I must condescend to wear it. I would have declined the gaudy array, but one of her friends whispered me, 'The custom is of long standing; when the face of a stranger is first seen a dress is always presented; I should displease Sumdun Begum by my refusal;—besides, it would be deemed an ill omen at the Mugganee of the young Bohue[13] Begum if I did not put on the Native dress before I saw the face of the bride elect.' These I found to be weighty arguments, and felt constrained to quiet their apprehensions of ill-luck by compliance; I therefore forced the gold dress and the glittering drapery over my other clothes, at the expense of some suffering from the heat, for it was at the very hottest season of the year, and the dulhaun was crowded with visitors.

This important point conceded to them, I was led to a side hall, where the little girl was seated on her carpet of rich embroidery, her face resting on her knees in apparent bashfulness. I could not directly ascertain whether she was plain, or pretty as the female agent had represented. I was allowed the privilege of decorating the young lady with the sweet jessamine guinahs,[14] and placing the ring on the forefinger of the right hand; after which, the ear-rings, the gold-tissue dress, the deputtah were all in their turn put on, the offering of money presented, and then I had the first embrace before her mother. She looked very pretty, just turned twelve. If I could have prevailed on her to be cheerful, I should have been much gratified to have extended my visit in her apartment, but the poor child seemed ready to sink with timidity; and out of compassion to the dear girl, I hurried away from the hall, to relieve her from the burden my presence seemed to inflict, the

moment I had accomplished my last duty, which was to feed her with my own hand, giving her seven pieces of sugar-candy; seven, on this occasion, is the lucky number, I presume, as I was particularly cautioned to feed her with exactly that number of pieces.

Returning to the assembly in the dulhaun, I would have gladly taken leave; but there was yet one other custom to be observed to secure a happy omen to the young people's union. Once again seated on the musnud with Sumdun Begum,[15] the female slaves entered with sherbet in silver basins. Each person taking sherbet is expected to deposit gold or silver coins in the tray; the sherbet-money at this house is collected for the bride; and when during the three days' performance of the marriage ceremony at the bridegroom's house sherbet is presented to the guests, the money collected there is reserved for him. The produce of the two houses is afterwards compared, and conclusions drawn as to the greatest portion of respect paid by the friends on either side. The poor people find the sherbet-money a useful fund to help them to keep house; but with the rich it is a mere matter to boast of, that so much money was collected in consequence of the number of visitors who attended the nuptials.

After the Mugganee ceremony had been performed, and before the marriage was solemnized, the festival of Buckrah Eade occurred;—in the eleventh Letter you will find it remarked, the bride and bridegroom elect then exchange presents;—my friend was resolved her son's presents should do honour to both houses, and the following may give you an idea of an Eade-gift.

Thirty-five goats and sheep of the finest breed procurable, which I succeeded in having sent in their natural dress, instead of being adorned with gold-cloth and painted horns: it was, however, with some persuasion the folly of this general practice was omitted in this instance.

The guinah or garland, of flowers on a tray covered with brocade. The guinah are sweet-scented flowers without stalks, threaded into garlands in many pretty ways, with great taste and ingenuity, intermixed with silver ribands; they are formed into bracelets, necklaces, armlets, chaplets for the head, and bangles for the legs. There are people in Lucknow who make the preparing of guinahs a profitable business, as the population is so extensive as to render these flower-ornaments articles of great request.

A tray filled with pawns, prepared with the usual ingredients, as lime, cuttie[16] (a bitter gum), betel-nut, tobacco, spices, &c.; these pawns are tied up in packets of a triangular form and covered with enamelled foil of many bright colours. Several trays of ripe fruits of the season, viz., kurbootahs[17] (shaddock), kabooza[18] (melons), ununas[19] (pine apple), guavers,[20] sherreefha[21] (custard-apple), kummeruck,[22] jarmun[23] (purple olives), orme[24] (mango), falsah,[25] kirhnee,[26] baer,[27] leechie,[28] ormpeach,[29] carounder,[30] and many other kinds of less repute.

Confectionery and sweetmeats, on trays, in all the varieties of Indian invention; a full-dress suit for the young lady; and on a silver tray the youth's nuzza of five gold mohurs, and twenty-one rupees.

The Eade offering of Meer Mahumud was escorted by servants, soldiers, and a band of music; and the young lady returned a present to the bridegroom elect of thirty-five goats and sheep, and a variety of undress skull-caps, supposed to be her own work, in spangles and embroidery. I may state here, that the Natives of India never go bare-headed in the house. The turban is always worn in company, whatever may be the inconvenience from heat; and in private life, a small skull-cap, often of plain white muslin, just covers the head. It is considered disgraceful in men to expose the head bare; removing the turban from the head of an individual would be deemed as insulting as pulling a nose in Europe.

Whatever Eade or festival may occur between the Mugganee and the final celebration of nuptials, presents are always interchanged by the young bride and bridegroom; and with all such observances there is one prevailing custom, which is, that though there should be nothing at hand but part of their own gifts, the trays are not allowed to go back without some trifling things to keep the custom in full force.

[1] The *Koran* (iv. 3) allows Musalmans to marry 'by twos, or threes, or fours'; but the passage has been interpreted in various ways.

[2] *Barat*.

[3] *Duli*, 'the Anglo-Indian 'dhooly'. Such wives are so called because they are brought to the houses of their husbands in an informal way, without a regular marriage procession.

[4] The King of Vijayanagar had twelve thousand wives: four thousand followed him on foot and served in the kitchen; the same number marched with him on horseback; the remainder in litters, and two or three thousand of them were bound to burn themselves with his corpse (Nicolo Conti, *India in the Fifteenth Century*, part iii, p. 6). In Orissa a palm-leaf record states that one monarch died prematurely just as he had married his sixty-thousandth wife, and a European traveller speaks of a later prince who had four thousand ladies (Sir W. Hunter, *Orissa*. ii, 132 f.). Manucci states that there were more than thirty thousand women in the palace of Shah Jahan at Dheli, and that he usually had two thousand women of different races in his zenana (*Storia de Major*, i. 195, ii. 330). Tippoo Sultan of Mysore married nine hundred women (Jaffur Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, 93).

[5] There in evidence that infanticide did prevail among some Musalman tribes. Where actual infanticide has disappeared, it has often been replaced by neglect of female infants, except in those castes where, owing to a scarcity of girls, they command a high price.—*Reports Census of India*, 1911, i. 216 ff; *Panjab*, 1911, i. 231.

[6] Ludhiana.

[7] No record of this proclamation has been traced in the histories of the time.

[8] The bride is often selected by praying for a dream in sleep, by manipulating the rosary, or by opening the *Koran* at random, and reading the first verse which comes

under the eye. Another method is to ascertain to which of the elements—fire, air, earth, water—the initials of the names of the pair correspond. If these agree, it is believed that the engagement will be prosperous.—Jaffur Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, 37.

[9] *Mangni*, 'the asking'.

[10] Compare the full account of brides' dress in Mrs. F. Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, i. 425.

[11] *Jama*.

[12] *Dalan*.

[13] *Bahu*, properly a son's wife or daughter-in-law: commonly applied to a bride or young wife.

[14] Probably the *genda* or French marigold (*Tagetes erecta*).

[15] Sumdun is always the title of the bride's mamma; Bohue, that of the young wife, and, therefore, my thus designating her here is premature. [*Samdhan* means a connexion by marriage. The mothers of bride and bridegroom are *samdhan* to each other.]

[16] *Kuth, kuttha*, the gum of *Acacia catechu*.

[17] The shaddock (*Citrus decumana*) is called *chakoira*; possibly confused with the next.

[18] *Kharbuzah, Cucumis melo*.

[19] *Ananas, Ananassa saliva*.

[20] Guava.

[21] *Sharifah, Anona squamosa*.

[22] *Kamrak, Averrhoa Carambola*.

[23] *Jamun, jaman, Eugenia Jambolana*.

[24] *Am, Mangifera indica*.

[25] *Falsa, phalsa, Greuria asiatica*.

[26] *Kirni, Canthium parviflorum*.

[27] *Ber, Zizyphus Jujuba*.

[28] *Lichi, Nephelium Lichi.*

[29] Possibly some confusion between *um,* the mango, and *alu, aru,* the peach.

[30] *Karaunda, Carissa Carandas.*

LETTER XIV

Wedding ceremonies of the Mussulmauns.—The new or full moon propitious to the rites being concluded.—Marriage settlements unknown.—Control of the wife over her own property.—Three days and nights occupied in celebrating the wedding.—Preparations previously made by both families.—Ostentatious display on those occasions.—Day of Sarchuck.—Customs on the day of Mayndhie.—Sending presents.—Day of Baarraat.—Procession of the bridegroom to fetch the bride.—The bride's departure to her new home.—Attendant ceremonies explained.—Similarity of the Mussulmaun and Hindu ceremonies.—Anecdote of a Moollah.—Tying the Narrah to the Moosul.

When the young lady's family have made all the necessary arrangements for that important event (their daughter's nuptials), notice is sent to the friends of the intended bridegroom, and the gentlemen of both families meet to settle on what day the celebration is to take place. They are guided in the final arrangement by the state of the moon—the new or full moon has the preference; she must, however, be clear of Scorpio, which, as I have before stated, they consider the unfortunate sign.[1] There are some moons in the year considered very unpropitious to marry in. At Mahurrum, for instance, no emergency as to time or circumstance would induce the female party to consent to the marriage solemnities taking place. In Rumzaun they have scruples, though not equal to those which they entertain against fulfilling the contract in Mahurrum, the month of mourning.

Marriage settlements are not known in Mussulmaun society. All contracts are made by word of mouth; and to their credit, honourable reliance is usually followed by honourable fulfilment of agreements. The husband is expected to be satisfied with whatever portion of his wife's fortune the friends may deem consistent or prudent to grant with their daughter. The wife is at liberty to keep under her own control any separate sum or allowance her parents may be pleased to give her, over and above the marriage portion granted to the husband with his wife.[2]

The husband rarely knows the value of his wife's private property unless, as sometimes happens, the couple in after years have perfect confidence in each other, and make no separate interests in worldly matters. Occasionally, when the married couple have not lived happily together, the wife has been known to bury her cash secretly; and perhaps she may die without disclosing the secret of her treasure to any one.

In India the practice of burying treasure is very common with females, particularly in villages, or where there are fears entertained of robbers. There is no difficulty in burying cash or other treasure, where the ground floors of the houses are merely beaten earth—boarded floors, indeed, are never seen in Hindoostaun—in the houses of the first classes of Natives they sometimes have them bricked and plastered, or paved with marble. During the rainy season I have sometimes observed the wooden tuckht[3] (a portable platform) in use with aged or delicate females, on which they make their seats from fear of the damp from the mud floor; but they complain that these accommodations are not half so comfortable as their ordinary seat.

The division of personal property between married people has the effect of rendering the wife much more independent than the married lady of other countries. The plan is a judicious one in the existing state of Mussulmaun society, for since the husband could at his pleasure add other wives, the whole property of the first wife might be squandered on these additions. In the middling classes of society, and where the husband is a religious person, this division of property is not so strictly maintained; yet every wife has the privilege, if she chooses to exercise it, of keeping a private purse, which the good wife will produce unasked to meet her husband's emergencies; and which the good husband is never known to demand, however great may be his necessities. There are many traits of character in the Mussulmaun world that render them both amiable and happy, wherever politeness of behaviour is brought to bear. I have seen some bright examples of forbearance and affectionate solicitude in both sexes, which would do honour to the most refined societies of the civilized world.

The marriage ceremony occupies three days and nights:—The first is called, Sarchuck;[4] the second, Mayndhie;[5] and the third, Baarraat,[6] (fate or destiny is the meaning of this word).

I am not aware that three days are required to accomplish the nuptials of the young couple in any other society of Mussulmauns distinct from those of Hindoostaun. Judging by similar usages among the Hindoo population, I am rather disposed to conjecture that this is one of the customs of the aborigines, imitated by the invaders, as the outward parade and publicity given to the event by the Mussulmauns greatly resemble those of the surrounding Hindoos.

There are no licences granted, nor any form of registry kept of marriages. Any person who is acquainted with the Khoraun may read the marriage ceremony, in the presence of witnesses if it be possible; but they usually employ a professed Moollah or Maulvee, in consideration of such persons being the most righteous in their lives; for they make this engagement a religious, as well as a civil contract.[7]

The day being fixed, the elders, male and female, of the two families, invite their several relatives, friends, and acquaintances to assemble, according to their means and convenience for entertaining visitors. The invitations are written in the Persian character on red paper, describing the particular event which they are expected to honour. During the week previous to Sarchuck, both families are busily engaged in sending round to their

several friends trays of ready-cooked dinners. Rich and poor share equally on these occasions; the reason assigned for which is, that the persons' nuptials may be registered in the minds of those who partake of the food, who in the course of time, might otherwise forget that they had ever heard of the young couple's nuptials.

The mother of Bohue Begum actively employed the intervening time, in finishing her preparations for the young lady's departure from the parental roof with suitable articles, which might prove the bride was not sent forth to her new family without a proper provision. There is certainly too much ostentation evinced on these occasions; but custom, prided custom, bids defiance to every better argument; and thus the mother, full of solicitude that her daughter should carry with her evident marks of parental affection, and be able to sustain her rank in life, loads her child with a profusion of worldly goods. The poorest people, in this instance, imitate their superiors with a blameable disregard to consequences. Many parents among the lower orders incur heavy debts to enable them to make a parade at their children's wedding, which proves a source of misery to themselves as long as they live.

It may be presumed the Sumdun Begum prepared more suits of finery than her daughter could wear out for years. A silver bedstead with the necessary furniture, as before described; a silver pawn-dawn,[8] round, and shaped very like a modern spice-box in England; a silver chillumchee[9] (wash-hand basin), and lota (water-jug with a spout, nearly resembling an old-fashioned coffee-pot); a silver luggun[10] (spittoon); silver surraie[11] (water-bottle); silver basins for water; several dozens of copper saucepans, plates and spoons for cooking; dishes, plates, and platters in all variety needful for the house, of metal or of stone. China or glass is rarely amongst the bride's portion, the only articles of glass I remember to have seen was the looking-glass for the bride's toilette, and that was framed and cased in pure silver. Stone dishes are a curious and expensive article, brought from Persia and Arabia, of a greenish colour, highly polished; the Natives call them racaab-puttie,[12] and prefer them to silver at their meals, having an idea that poisoned food would break them; and he who should live in fear of such a calamity, feels secure that the food is pure when the dish of this rare stone is placed before him perfect.

Amongst the various articles sent with the bride to her new home is the much prized musnud, cushions and carpet to correspond; shutteringhies, and calico carpets, together with the most minute article used in Native houses, whether for the kitchen, or for the accommodation of the young lady in her apartments; all these are conveyed in the lady's train when she leaves her father's house to enter that of her husband. I am afraid my descriptions will be deemed tediously particular, so apt are we to take the contagion of example from those we associate with; and as things unimportant in other societies are made of so much consequence to these people, I am in danger of giving to trifles more importance than may be agreeable to my readers.

On the day of Sarchuck the zeenahnahs of both houses are completely filled with visitors of all grades, from the wives and mothers of noblemen, down to the humblest acquaintance of the family. To do honour to the hostess, the guests appear in their best attire and most valuable ornaments.

A wedding in the family of a respectable Mussulmaun is very often the medium of reconciling long standing estrangements between friends. Human nature has the same failings in every climate; there will be some who entertain jealousies and envyings in all societies, but a wedding with these people is a perfect peace-maker, since none of the invited can consistently stay away; and in such an assembly, where is the evil mind to disturb harmony, or recur to past grievances?

The day of Sarchuck is the first time the young lady receives the appellation of Dullun,[13] at which time also the bridegroom is designated Dullha.[14] Dullun is kept in strict confinement, in a dark room or closet, during the whole three days' merriment going forward under the parental roof; whilst the bridegroom is the most prominent person in the assembly of the males, where amusements are contrived to please and divert him, the whole party vieing in personal attentions to him. The ladies are occupied in conversation and merriment, and amused with the native songs and music of the dominie, smoking the hookha, eating pawn, dinner, &c. Company is their delight, and time passes pleasantly with them in such an assembly.

The second day, Mayndhie, is one of bustle and preparation in the Sumdun Begum's department; it is spent in arranging the various articles that are to accompany the bride's Mayndhie, which is forwarded in the evening to the bridegroom with great parade.

It is so well known that I need hardly mention the fact, that the herb mayndhie[15] is in general request amongst the natives of India, for the purpose of dyeing the hands and feet; it is considered by them an indispensable article to their comfort, keeping those members cool and a great ornament to the person.

Long established custom obliges the bride to send mayndhie on the second night of the nuptials to the bridegroom; and, to make the event more conspicuous, presents proportioned to the means of the party accompany the trays of prepared mayndhie.

The female friends of the bride's family attend the Mayndhie procession in covered conveyances, and the male guests on horses, elephants, and in palkies; trains of soldiers, servants, and bands of music swell the procession (among people of distinction) to a magnitude inconceivable to those who have not visited the Native cities of Hindoostaun, or witnessed the parade of a marriage ceremony.

Amongst the bride's presents with mayndhie, may be noticed every thing requisite for a full-dress suit for the bridegroom, and the etceteras of his toilette; confectionery, dried fruits, preserves, the prepared pawns, and a multitude of trifles too tedious to enumerate, but which are nevertheless esteemed luxuries with the Native young people, and are considered essential to the occasion. One thing I must not omit, the sugar-candy, which forms the source of amusement when the bridegroom is under the dominion of the females in his mother's zeenahnah. The artush bajie,[16] (fireworks) sent with the presents, are concealed in flowers formed of the transparent uberuck:[17] these flowers are set out in frames, called chumund,[18] and represent beds of flowers in their varied forms and colours; these in their number and gay appearance have a pretty effect in the

procession, interspersed with the trays containing the dresses, &c. All the trays are first covered with basket-work raised in domes, and over these are thrown draperies of broadcloth, gold-cloth, and brocade, neatly fringed in bright colours.

The Mayndhie procession having reached the bridegroom's house, bustle and excitement pervade through every department of the mansion. The gentlemen are introduced to the father's hall; the ladies to the youth's mother, who in all possible state is prepared to receive the bride's friends.

The interior of a zeenahnah has been already described; the ladies crowd into the centre hall to witness, through the blinds of bamboo, the important process of dressing the young bridegroom in his bride's presents. The centre purdah is let down, in which are openings to admit the hands and feet; and close to this purdah a low stool is placed. When all these preliminary preparations are made, and the ladies securely under cover, notice is sent to the male assembly that, 'Dullha is wanted'; and he then enters the zeenahnah court-yard, amidst the deafening sounds of trumpets and drums from without, and a serenade from the female singers within. He seats himself on the stool placed for him close to the purdah, and obeys the several commands he receives from the hidden females, with childlike docility. The moist mayndhie is then tied on with bandages by hands he cannot see, and, if time admits, one hour is requisite to fix the dye bright and permanent on the hands and feet. During this delay, the hour is passed in lively dialogues with the several purdahed dames, who have all the advantage of seeing though themselves unseen; the singers occasionally lauding his praise in extempore strains, after describing the loveliness of his bride, (whom they know nothing about), and foretelling the happiness which awaits him in his marriage, but which, in the lottery, may perhaps prove a blank. The sugar-candy, broken into small lumps, is presented by the ladies whilst his hands and feet are fast bound in the bandages of mayndhie; but as he cannot help himself, and it is an omen of good to eat the bride's sweets at this ceremony, they are sure he will try to catch the morsels which they present to his mouth and then draw back, teasing the youth with their banterings, until at last he may successfully snap at the candy, and seize the fingers also with the dainty, to the general amusement of the whole party and the youth's entire satisfaction.

The mayndhie supposed to have done its duty, the bandages are removed; his old unnah,[19] the nurse of his infancy (always retained for life), assists him with water to wash off the leaves, dries his feet and hands, rubs him with otta,[20] robes him in his bride's presents, and ornaments him with the guinah. Thus attired he takes leave of his tormentors, sends respectful messages to his bride's family, and bows his way from their guardianship to the male apartment, where he is greeted by a flourish of trumpets and the congratulations of the guests, many of whom present nuzzas and embrace him cordially.

The dinner is introduced at twelve amongst the bridegroom's guests, and the night passed in good-humoured conviviality, although the strongest beverage at the feast consists of sugar and water sherbet. The dancing-women's performances, the display of fireworks, the dinner, pawn, and hookha, form the chief amusements of the night, and they break up only when the dawn of morning approaches.

The bride's female friends take sherbet and pawn after the bridegroom's departure from the zeenahnah, after which they hasten away to the bride's assembly, to detail the whole business of their mission.

I have often heard the ladies complain, that the time hangs very heavy on their hands whilst the party have gone to perform Mayndhie, until the good ladies return with their budget of particulars. Hundreds of questions are then put to them by the inquisitive dames, how the procession passed off?—whether accident or adventure befel them on the march?—what remarks were made on the bride's gifts?—-but most of all they want to know, how the bridegroom looked, and how he behaved under their hands? The events of the evening take up the night in detailing, with the occasional interruptions of dinner, pawn, and sherbet; and so well are they amused, that they seldom feel disposed to sleep until the crowing of the cock warns them that the night has escaped with their diversified amusements.

The eventful Baarraat arrives to awaken in the heart of a tender mother all the good feelings of fond affection; she is, perhaps, about to part with the great solace of her life under many domestic trials; at any rate, she transfers her beloved child to another protection. All marriages are not equally happy in their termination; it is a lottery, a fate, in the good mother's calculation. Her darling child may be the favoured of Heaven for which she prays; she may be, however, the miserable first wife of a licentious pluralist; nothing is certain, but she will strive to trust in God's mercy, that the event prove a happy one to her dearly-loved girl.

I have said the young bride is in close confinement during the days of celebrating her nuptials; on the third she is tormented with the preparations for her departure. The mayndhie must be applied to her hands and feet, the formidable operations of bathing, drying her hair, oiling and dressing her head, dyeing her lips, gums, and teeth with antimony, fixing on her the wedding ornaments, the nut (nose-ring) presented by her husband's family: the many rings to be placed on her fingers and toes, the rings fixed in her ears, are all so many new trials to her, which though a complication of inconveniences, she cannot venture to murmur at, and therefore submits to with the passive meekness of a lamb.

Towards the close of the evening, all this preparation being fulfilled, the marriage portion is set in order to accompany the bride. The guests make their own amusements for the day; the mother is too much occupied with her daughter's affairs to give much of her time or attention to them; nor do they expect it, for they all know by experience the nature of a mother's duties at such an interesting period.

The bridegroom's house is nearly in the same state of bustle as the bride's, though of a very different, description, as the preparing for the reception of a bride is an event of vast importance in the opinion of a Mussulmaun. The gentlemen assemble in the evening, and are regaled with sherbet and the hookha, and entertained with the nuutch-singing and fireworks until the appointed hour for setting out in the procession to fetch the bride to her new home.

The procession is on a grand scale; every friend or acquaintance, together with their elephants, are pressed into the service of the bridegroom on this night of Baarraat. The young man himself is mounted on a handsome charger, the legs, tail, and mane of which are dyed with mayndhie, whilst the ornamental furniture of the horse is splendid with spangles and embroidery. The dress of the bridegroom is of gold-cloth, richly trimmed with a turban to correspond, to the top of which is fastened an immense bunch of silver trimming, that falls over his face to his waist, and answers the purpose of a veil,[21] (this is in strict keeping with the Hindoo custom at their marriage processions). A select few of the females from the bridegroom's house attend in his train to bring home the bride, accompanied by innumerable torches, with bands of music, soldiers, and servants, to give effect to the procession. On their arrival at the gate of the bride's residence, the gentlemen are introduced to the father's apartments, where fireworks, music, and singing, occupy their time and attention until the hour for departure arrives.

The marriage ceremony is performed in the presence of witnesses, although the bride is not seen by any of the males at the time, not even by her husband, until they have been lawfully united according to the common form.

In the centre of the hall, in the zeenahnah, a tuckht (platform) six feet square is placed, on which the musnud of gold brocade is set. This is the bride's seat when dressed for her nuptials; she is surrounded by ladies who bear witness to the marriage ceremony. The purdahs are let down, and the Maulvee, the bridegroom, the two fathers, and a few male friends are introduced to the zeenahnah court-yard, with a flourish of trumpets and deafening sounds of drums. They advance with much gravity towards the purdahs, and arrange themselves close to this slender partition between the two sexes.

The Maulvee commences by calling on the young maiden by name, to answer to his demand, 'Is it by your own consent this marriage takes place with ——?' naming the person who is the bridegroom; the bride answers, 'It is by my consent.' The Maulvee then explains the law of Mahumud, and reads a certain chapter from that portion of the Khoraun which binds the parties in holy wedlock.[22] He then turns to the young man, and asks him to name the sum he proposes as his wife's dowry. The bridegroom thus called upon, names ten, twenty, or perhaps a hundred lacs of rupees; the Maulvee repeats to all present the amount proposed, and then prays that the young couple thus united may be blessed in this world and in eternity. All the gentlemen then retire, except the bridegroom, who is delayed, as soon as this is accomplished, entering the hall until the bride's guests have retreated into the side rooms: as soon as this is accomplished he is introduced into the presence of his mother-in-law and her daughter by the women servants. He studiously avoids looking up as he enters the hall, because, according to the custom of this people, he must first see his wife's face in a looking-glass, which is placed before the young couple, when he is seated on the musnud by his bride. Happy for him if he then beholds a face that bespeaks the gentle being he hopes Fate has destined to make him happy; if otherwise he must submit; there is no untying the sacred contract.

Many absurd customs follow this first introduction of the bride and bridegroom. When the procession is all formed, the goods and chattels of the bride are loaded on the heads of

the carriers; the bridegroom conveys his young wife in his arms to the chundole (covered palankeen), which is in readiness within the court, and the procession moves off in grand style, with a perpetual din of noisy music until they arrive at the bridegroom's mansion.

The poor mother has perhaps had many struggles with her own heart to save her daughter's feelings during the preparation for departure; but when the separation takes place the scene is affecting beyond description. I never witnessed anything to equal it in other societies: indeed, so powerfully are the feelings of the mother excited, that she rarely acquires her usual composure until her daughter is allowed to revisit her, which is generally within a week after her marriage.

P.S.—I have remarked that, in important things which have nothing to do with the religion of the Mussulmauns, they are disposed to imitate the habits of the Hindoos; this is more particularly to be traced in many of their wedding customs.

In villages where there are a greater proportion of Hindoos than Mussulmauns the females of the two people mix more generally than is usually allowed in cities or large towns; and it is among this mingled population that we find the spirit of superstition influencing the female character in more marked manner than it does in more populous places, which the following anecdote, will illustrate. The parties were known to the person who related the circumstance to me.

'A learned man, a moollah[23] or head-teacher and expounder of the Mahumudan law, resided in a village six koss (twelve miles English) distant from Lucknow, the capital of Oude. This moollah was married to a woman of good family, by whom he had a large progeny of daughters. He lived in great respect, and cultivated his land with success, the produce of his farm not only supporting his own family, but enabling the good moollah to distribute largely amongst the poor, his neighbours, and the passing traveller. A hungry applicant never left his door without a meal of the same wholesome, yet humble fare, which formed his own daily sustenance. Bread and dhall he preferred to the most choice delicacies, as by this abstemious mode of living, he was enabled to feed and comfort the afflicted with the residue of his income.

'This moollah was one of the most pious men of the age, and alive to the interests of his fellow-mortals, both temporal and eternal. He gave instruction gratis to as many pupils as chose to attend his lectures, and desired to acquire from his matured knowledge an introduction to the points of faith, and instruction in the Mussulmaun laws. Numbers of young students attended his hall daily, to listen to the expounding of the rules and maxims he had acquired by a long life devoted to the service of God, and his duty to mankind. In him, many young men found a benefactor who blended instruction with temporal benefits; so mild and persuasive were this good moollah's monitions, that he lived in the affection, venerations and respect of his pupils, as a fond father in the love of his children.

'The wife of this good man managed the domestic affairs of the family, which were very little controlled by her husband's interference. On an occasion of solemnizing the nuptials

of one of their daughters, the wife sent a message to the moollah, by a female slave, requiring his immediate presence in the zeenahnah, that he might perform his allotted part in the ceremony, which, as elder of the house, could not be confided to any other hands but his. This was to "tie the naarah to the moosul".[24]

'The moollah was deeply engaged in expounding to his pupils a difficult passage of the Khoraun when the slave entered and delivered her message. "Coming", he answered, without looking at the messenger, and continued his exposition.

'The good woman of the house was in momentary expectation of her husband's arrival, but when one hour had elapsed, her impatience overcame her discretion, and she dispatched the slave a second time to summon the moollah, who, in his anxiety to promote a better work, had forgotten the subject of tying the naarah to the moosul. The slave again entered the hall, and delivered her lady's message; he was then engaged in a fresh exposition, and, as before, replied "coming", but still proceeding with his subject as if he heard not the summons.

'Another hour elapsed, and the wife's ordinary patience was exhausted; "Go to your master, slave!" she said with authority in her voice and manner; "go ask your master from me, whether it is his intention to destroy the peace of his house, and the happiness of his family. Ask him, why he should delay performing so important a duty at this ceremony, when his own daughter's interest and welfare are at stake?"

'The slave faithfully conveyed the message, and the moollah, finding that his domestic peace depended on submitting to the superstitious notions of his wife, accompanied the slave to the zeenahnah without further delay.

'The moollah's compliance with the absurd desires of his wife surprised the students, who discussed the subject freely in his absence. He having always taught them the folly of prejudice and the absurdity of superstition, they could not, comprehend how it was the moollah had been led to comply with a request so much at variance with the principles he endeavoured to impress upon them.

'On his return, after a short absence, to his pupils, he was about to re-commence the passage at which he had left off to attend his wife's summons; one of the young men, however, interrupted him by the inquiry, "Whether he had performed the important business of tying the naarah to the moosul?"—"Yes," answered the moollah, very mildly, "and by so doing I have secured peace to my wife's disturbed mind."—"But how is it, reverend Sir," rejoined the student, "that your actions and your precepts are at variance? You caution us against every species of superstition, and yet that you have in this instance complied with one, is very evident."—"I grant you, my young friend," said the moollah, "that I have indeed done so, but my motive for this deviation is, I trust, correct. I could have argued with you on the folly of tying the naarah to the moosul, and you would have been convinced by my arguments; but my wife, alas! would not listen to anything but the custom—the custom of the whole village. I went with reluctance, I performed the ceremony with still greater; yet I had no alternative if I valued harmony in my household:

this I have now secured by my acquiescence in the simple desire of my wife. Should any evil accident befall my daughter or her husband, I am spared the reproaches that would have been heaped upon me, as being the cause of the evil, from my refusal to tie the naarah to the moosul. The mere compliance with this absurd custom, to secure peace and harmony, does not alter my faith; I have saved others from greater offences, by my passive obedience to the wishes of my wife, who ignorantly places dependance on the act, as necessary to her daughter's welfare."

'The students were satisfied with his explanation, and their respect was increased for the good man who had thus taught them to see and to cherish the means of living peaceably with all mankind, whenever their actions do not tend to injure their religious faith, or infringe on the principles of morality and virtue.'

[1] See p. 158.

[2] For the right of the bride to her private property, see N.E.B. Baillie, *Digest of Moohummudan Law* (1875), 146 ff.

[3] *Takht.*

[4] *Sachaq*, the fruits and other gifts carried in procession in earthen pots ornamented with various devices.—Jaffur Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, 73.

[5] *Menhdi*.

[6] *Barat, barat*: meaning 'bridegroom's procession'.

[7] Among the Khojas of West India a person from the lodge to which the parties belong recites the names of the Panjtan-i-pak, the five holy ones—Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Husain—with the invocation: 'I begin the wedding of —— with ——, to wed as did Fatimah, the bright-faced Lady (on whom be peace!) with the Lord and Leader, the Receiver of the Testament of the Chosen and Pure, the Lord 'Ali, the son of Abu-Talib.'—*Bombay Gazetteer*, ix, part ii, 45.

[8] *Pandan*.

[9] *Chilamchi*.

[10] *Lagan*.

[11] *Surahi*.

[12] *Rikab*, 'a cup'; *patthari*, 'made of stone'. China dishes are also supposed to betray poison: see J. Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia* (Hakluyt Society's edition), i. 87.

[13] *Dulhin*.

[14] *Dulha*.

[15] *Menhdi*: the henna plant, *Lawsonia alba*.

[16] *Atishbazi*, fire-play.

[17] *Abrak*, talc.

[18] *Chaman*, a flower-bed.

[19] *Anna*.

[20] Otto, *'itr* of roses.

[21] 'The dress of the bridegroom consisted entirely of cloth of gold; and across his forehead was bound a sort of fillet made of an embroidery of pearls, from which, long strings of gold hung down all over his face to his saddle-bow; and to his mouth he kept a red silk handkerchief closely pressed to prevent devils entering his mouth.'—Mrs. F. Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, i. 438 f. This fillet is called *sihra*, and it is intended to avert the influence of the Evil Eye and of demons.

[22] The officiating Mulla or Qazi lifts the bridegroom's veil, makes him gargle his throat three times with water, and seating him facing Mecca, requires him to repeat a prayer to Allah for forgiveness (*istighfarullah*); the four Qul, or chapters of the *Koran* commencing with the word *qul*, 'say' (cix, cxii, cxiii, cxiv); the Kalima or Creed: 'There is no deity but Allah: Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah'; the Articles of Belief (*Sifat-i-iman*) in Allah, his Angels, the Scriptures, the Prophets, the Resurrection, and Day of Judgement. His absolute decree and predestination of Good and Evil; the Prayer of Obedience, said standing (*du'a'l-qunut*). If he be illiterate, the meaning of all these should be explained to him.—Jafnir Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, 86.

[23] Mulla.

[24] The naarah is a cord of many threads dyed red and yellow; the moosul the heavy beam in use where rice is to be cleansed from the husks. The custom is altogether of Hindoo origin. [*Author*.] [When the condiment (*ubtan*), made of the flour of gram, mixed with oil and perfumes, which is rubbed on the bride and bridegroom, is being ground, the handle of the hand-mill is smeared with sandalwood paste, powder of a kind of nut (*Vangueira spinosa*), and some betel leaves; betel-nuts wrapped in a piece of new red cloth are tied to it. Then seven women, whose husbands are living, sit down to grind the condiment. Some raw rice is put in a red cloth, and with a parcel of betel-leaf is tied to the mill-handle with a thread (*nara*). Women pretend to beat it, and sing a marriage song. The rite is a form of fertility magic. The handle of the mill here represents the rice-

pounder (*musal*) in the rite described in the text.—*Bombay Gazetteer*, ix, part i, 101; part ii, 163 f.[7]]

LETTER XV

On the birth and management of children in Hindoostaun.—Increase of joy on the birth of a Son.—Preference generally shown to male children.—Treatment of Infants.—Day of Purification.—Offerings presented on this occasion to the child.—The anniversary of the birthday celebrated.—Visit of the father to the Durgah.—Pastimes of boys.—Kites.—Pigeons.—The Mhogdhur.—Sword-exercise.—The Bow and Arrows.—The Pellet-bow.—Crows.—Sports of Native gentlemen.—Cock-fighting.—Remarks upon horses, elephants, tigers, and leopards.—Pigeon-shooting.—Birds released from captivity on particular occasions.—Reasons for the extension of the royal clemency in Native Courts.—Influence of the Prime Minister in the administration of justice.

The bustle of a wedding in the family of a Mussulmaun having subsided, and the bride become familiar with her new relatives, the mother also reconciled to the separation from her child by the knowledge of her happiness,—for they are allowed frequent intercourse,—the next important subject which fills their whole hearts with hope and anxiety, is the expected addition to the living members of the family. Should this occur within the first year of their union, it is included in the catalogue of 'Fortune's favours', as an event of no small magnitude to call forth their joy and gratitude. Many are the trifling ceremonies observed by the females of this uneducated people, important in their view to the well-being of both mother and infant, but so strongly partaking of superstition that time would be wasted in speaking of them; I will therefore hasten to the period of the infant's birth, which, if a boy, is greeted by the warmest demonstrations of unaffected joy in the houses both of the parents of the bride and bridegroom. When a female child is born, there is much less clamourous rejoicing at its birth than when a son is added to honour the family;[1] but the good mother will never be dissatisfied with the nature of the gift, who can appreciate the source whence she receives the blessing. She rests satisfied that unerring Wisdom hath thus ordained, and bows with submission to His decree. She desires sons only as they are coveted by the father, and procure for the mother increased respect from the world, but she cannot actually love her infant less because it is a female.

The birth of a son is immediately announced by a discharge of artillery, where cannon are kept; or by musketry in the lower grades of the Native population, even to the meanest peasant, with whom a single match-lock proclaims the honour as effectually as the volley of his superiors. The women say the object in firing at the moment the child is born, is to prevent his being startled at sounds by giving him so early an introduction to the report of muskets; but in this they are evidently mistaken, since we never find a musket announcing the birth of a female child.[2] They fancy there is more honour attached to a house where are many sons. The men make them their companions, which in the present

state of Mussulmaun society, girls cannot be at any age. Besides which, so great is the trouble and anxiety in getting suitable matches for their daughters, that they are disposed to be more solicitous for male than female children.

Amongst the better sort of people the mother very rarely nourishes her own infant; and I have known instances, when a wet-nurse could not be procured, where the infant has been reared by goals' milk, rather than the good lady should be obliged to fatigue herself with her infant. The great objection is, that in Mussulmaun families nurses are required to be abstemious in their diet, by no means an object of choice amongst so luxurious a people. A nurse is not allowed for the first month or more to taste animal food, and even during the two years—the usual period of supporting infancy by this nourishment—the nurse lives by rule both in quality and quantity of such food only as may be deemed essential to the well-being of the child.

The lower orders of the people benefit by their superiors' prejudices against nursing, and a wet-nurse once engaged in a family becomes a member of that house to the end of her days, unless she chooses to quit it herself.

On the fourth day after the birth of a son, the friends of both families are invited to share in the general joy testified by a noisy assembly of singing-women, people chattering, smell of savoury dishes, and constant bustle; which, to any other females in the world would be considered annoyances, but in their estimation are agreeable additions to the happiness of the mother, who is in most cases screened only by a curtain from the multitude of noisy visitors assembled to rejoice on the important event. I could not refrain, on one of these occasions, remarking on the injudicious arrangement at such a time, when I thought quiet was really needed to the invalid's comfort. The lady thought otherwise; she was too much rejoiced at this moment of her exaltation to think of quiet; all the world would know she was the mother of a son; this satisfied her for all that she suffered from the noisy mirth and increased heat arising from the multitude of her visitors, who stayed the usual time, three days and nights. The ladies, however, recover their strength rapidly. They are attended by females in their time of peril, and with scarcely an instance of failure. Nature is kind. Science has not yet stepped within the confines of the zeenahnah. All is Nature with these uneducated females, and as they are under no apprehension, the hour arrives without terror, and passes over without weakening fears. They trust in God, and suffer patiently. It may be questioned, however, whether their pains at that juncture equal those of females in Europe. Their figure has never been tortured by stays and whalebone; indeed, I do not recollect having met with an instance of deformity in the shape of any inhabitant of a zeenahnah.

On the ninth day the infant is well bathed,—I cannot call any of its previous ablutions a bath,[3]—then its little head is well oiled, and the fillet thrown aside, which is deemed necessary from the first to the ninth day. The infant from its birth is laid in soft beaten cotton, with but little clothing until it has been well bathed, and even then the dress would deserve to be considered more as ornamental covering than useful clothing; a thin muslin loose shirt, edged and bordered with silver ribands, and a small skull-cap to correspond, comprises their dress. Blankets, robes, and sleeping-dresses, are things unknown in the

nursery of a zeenahnah. The baby is kept during the month in a reclining position, except when the nurse receives it in her arms to nourish it; indeed for many months the infant is but sparingly removed from its reclining position. They would consider it a most cruel disturbance of a baby's tranquillity, to set it up or hold it in the arms, except for the purpose of giving it nourishment.

The infant's first nourishment is of a medicinal kind, composed of umultass[4](cassia), a vegetable aperient, with sugar, and distilled water of aniseed; this is called gootlie,[5] and the baby has no other food for the first three days, after which it receives the nurse's aid. After the third day a small proportion of opium is administered, which practice is continued daily until the child is three or four years old.

The very little clothing on infants in India would of itself teach the propriety of keeping them in a reclining position, as the mere natural strength of the poor baby has nothing to support it by the aid of bandages or clothing. The nurse receives the baby on a thin pillow of calico quilted together, called gooderie;[6] it is changed us often us required, and is the only method as yet introduced amongst the Natives to secure cleanliness and comfort to their infants. In the cold season, when the thermometer may range from forty-five to fifty, the method of inducing warmth is by means of cotton or wadded quilts; flannel, as I have said before, they know not the use of. The children, however, thrive without any of those things we deem essential to the comfort of infancy, and the mamma is satisfied with the original customs, which, it may be supposed, are (without a single innovation) unchanged since the period of Abraham, their boasted forefather.

On the fortieth day after the infant's birth, the same rites are observed as by the Jews (with the exception of circumcision), and denominated, as with them, the Day of Purification. On this day the infant is submitted to the hands of the barber, who shaves the head, as commanded by their law. The mother bathes and dresses in her most costly attire. Dinner is cooked for the poor in abundance. Friends and relatives call on the mother to present nuzzas and offerings, and to bring presents to the child, after the manner of the wise men's offerings, so familiar to us in our Scriptures. The offerings to the child are often costly and pretty; bangles and various ornaments of the precious metals. The taawees[7] of gold and silver are tablets on which engraved verses from the Khoraun are inscribed in Arabic characters; these are strung on cords of gold thread, and suspended, when the child is old enough to bear their weight, over one shoulder, crossing the back and chest, and reaching below the hip on the opposite side; they have a remarkably good effect with the rich style of dressing Native children. In some of the offerings from the great people are to be observed precious stones set in necklaces, and bangles for the arms and ankles. All who visit at these times take something for the baby; it would be deemed an omen of evil in any one neglecting to follow this immemorial custom; not that they are avaricious, but that they are anxious for their infant's prosperity, which these tributes are supposed to indicate.[8]

The mother thus blessed with a darling son is almost the idol of the new family she has honoured; and when such a person happens to be an agreeable, prudent woman, she is likely to remain without a rival in her husband's heart, who has no inducement to add

dhollie[9] wives to his establishment when his home is made happy to him by the only wife who can do him honour by the alliance.

The birthday of each son in a family is regularly kept. The term used for the occasion is Saul-girrah[10]—derived, from saul, a year, girrah, to tie a knot. The custom is duly maintained by tying a knot on a string kept for the purpose by the mother, on the return of her boy's birthday. The girls' years are numbered by a silver loop or ring being added yearly to the gurdonie,[11] or silver neck-ring. These are the only methods of registering the ages of Mussulmaun children.

The Saul-girrah is a day of annual rejoicing through the whole house of which the boy is a member; music, fireworks, toys, and whatever amusement suits his age and taste, are liberally granted to fill up the measure of his happiness; whilst his father and mother have each their assemblies to the fullest extent of their means. Dinner is provided liberally for the guests, and the poor are not neglected, whose prayers and blessings are coveted by the parents for their offspring's benefit; and they believe the blessings of the poor are certain mediations at the throne of mercy which cannot fail to produce benefits on the person in whose favour they are invoked.

The boy's nurse is on all occasions of rejoicing the first person to be considered in the distribution of gifts; she is, indeed, only second in the estimation of the parents to the child she has reared and nourished; and with the child, she is of more consequence even than his natural parents. The wet-nurse, I have said, is retained in the family to the end of her days, and whatever children she may have of her own, they are received into the family of her employer without reserve, either as servants or companions, and their interest in life regarded and watched over with the solicitude of relations, by the parents of the boy she has nursed.

At seven years old the boys are circumcised, as by their law directed. The thanksgiving when the child is allowed to emerge from confinement, gives rise to another jubilee in the family.

At Lucknow we see, almost daily, processions on their way to the Durgah (before described),[12] where the father conveys the young Mussulmaun to return thanks and public acknowledgements at the sainted shrine. The procession is planned on a grand scale, and all the male friends that can be collected attend in the cavalcade to do honour to so interesting an occasion.

When the prayer and thanksgiving have been duly offered in the boy's name at the Durgah, money is distributed amongst the assembled poor; and on the way home, silver and copper coins are thrown to the multitude who crowd around the procession. The scrambling and tumult on these occasions can only be relished by the Natives, who thus court popularity; but they rarely move in state without these scenes of confusion following in their train. I have witnessed thousands of people following the King's train, on his visiting the Durgah at Lucknow, when his Majesty and his Prime Minister scattered several thousands of rupees amongst the populace. The noise was deafening,

some calling blessings on the King, others quarrelling and struggling to force away the prize from the happy one who had caught, in the passing shower, a rupee or two in his drapery. Some of the most cunning secure the prize in their mouths to save themselves from the plunderer; some are thrown down and trampled under foot; the sandy soil, however, renders their situation less alarming than such a calamity would be in London, but it is altogether a scene of confusion sufficient to terrify any one, except those who delight in their ancient customs without regarding consequences to individuals.

The amusements of boys in India differ widely from the juvenile sports of the English youth; here there are neither matches at cricket nor races; neither hoops nor any other game which requires exercise on foot. Marbles they have, and such other sports as suit their habits and climate, and can be indulged in without too much bodily exertion. They fly kites at all ages. I have seen men in years, even, engaged in this amusement, alike unconscious that they were wasting time, or employing it in pursuits fitted only for children. They are flown from the flat roofs of the houses, where it is common with the men to take their seat at sunset. They are much amused by a kind of contest with kites, which is carried on in the following manner. The neighbouring gentlemen, having provided themselves with lines, previously rubbed with paste and covered with pounded glass, raise their kites, which, when brought in contact with each other by a current of air, the topmost string cuts through the under one, when down falls the kite, to the evident amusement of the idlers in the streets or roadway, who with shouts and hurrahs seek to gain possession of the toy, with as much avidity as if it were a prize of the greatest value: however, from the numerous competitors, and their great zeal to obtain possession of it, it is usually torn to pieces. Much skill is shown in the endeavours of each party to keep his string uppermost, by which he is enabled to cut that of his adversary's kite.

The male population are great pigeon-fanciers, and are very choice in their breed, having every variety of the species they can possibly procure; some are brought from different parts of the world at an enormous expense. Each proprietor of a flock of pigeons knows his own birds from every other. They are generally confined in bamboo houses erected on the flat roofs of the mansions, where at early dawn and at sunset the owner takes his station to feed his pets and give them a short airing. Perhaps a neighbour's flock have also emerged from their cages at the same time, when mingling in the circuit round and round the buildings (as often happens), one or more from one person's flock will return home with those of another; in which case, they are his lawful prize for ever, unless his neighbour wishes to redeem the captives by a price, or by an exchange of prisoners. The fortunate holder, however, of such prize makes his own terms, which are perhaps exorbitant, particularly if he have any ill-will against the proprietor, or the stray pigeon happen to be of a peculiarly rare kind.[13] Many are the proofs of good breeding and civility, elicited on such occasions between gentlemen; and many, also, are the perpetuated quarrels where such a collision of interests happens between young men of bad feelings, or with persons having any previous dislike to each other.

The chief out-door exercise taken by the youth of India, is an occasional ride on horseback or the elephant. They do not consider walking necessary to health; besides which, it is plebeian, and few ever walk who can maintain a conveyance. They exercise

the moghdhur[14] (dumb-bell) as the means of strengthening the muscles and opening the chest. These moghdhurs, much resembling the club of Hercules, are used in pairs, each weighing from eight to twenty pounds; they are brandished in various ways over the head, crossed behind, and back again, with great ease and rapidity by those with whom the art has become familiar by long use. Those who would excel in the use of the moghdhurs practise every evening regularly; when, after the exercise, they have their arms and shoulders plastered with a moist clay, which they suppose strengthens the muscles and prevents them from taking cold after so violent an exercise. The young men who are solicitous to wield the sabre with effect and grace, declare this practice to be of the greatest service to them in their sword exercise: they go so far as to say, that they only use the sword well who have practised the moghdhur for several years.

At their sword exercise, they practise 'the stroke' on the hide of a buffalo, or on a fish called rooey,[15] the scales of which form an excellent coat of mail, each being the size of a crown-piece, and the substance sufficient to turn the edge of a good sabre. The fish is produced alive from the river for this purpose; however revolting as the practice may appear to the European, it does not offend the feelings of the Natives, who consider the fish incapable of feeling after the first stroke; but, as regards the buffalo, I am told the most cruel inflictions have been made, by men who would try their blade and their skill on the staked animal without mercy.

The lance is practised by young men of good family as an exercise; and by the common people, as the means of rendering them eligible to the Native military service of India. It is surprising to witness the agility of some of the Natives in the exercise of the lance; they are generally good horsemen, and at full speed will throw the lance, dismount to recover it, and remount, often without stirrups, with a celerity inconceivable. I have seen them at these exercises with surprise, remembering the little activity they exhibit in their ordinary habits.

The Indian bow and arrow has greatly diminished as a weapon of defence in modern times; but all practise the use of the bow, as they fancy it opens the chest and gives ease and grace to the figure; things of no trifling importance with the Mussulmaun youth. I have seen some persons seated practising the bow, who were unable to bear the fatigue of standing; in those cases, a heavy weight and pulley are attached to the bow, which requires as much force in pulling as it would require to send an arrow from sixty to a hundred yards from the place they occupy.[16]

The pellet-bow is in daily use to frighten away the crows from the vicinity of man's abode; the pellets are made of clay baked in the sun, and although they do not wound they bruise most desperately. Were it not for this means of annoying these winged pests, they would prove a perfect nuisance to the inhabitants, particularly within the confines of a zeenahnah, where these impudent birds assemble at cooking-time, to the great annoyance of the cooks, watching their opportunity to pounce upon anything they may incautiously leave uncovered. I have often seen women placed as watchers with the pellet-bow, to deter the marauders the whole time dinner was preparing in the kitchen. The front of these cooking-rooms are open to the zeenahnah court-yard, neither doors,

windows, nor curtains being deemed necessary, where the smoke has no other vent than through the open front into the court-yard.

The crows are so daring that they will enter the yard, where any of the children may be taking their meals (which they often do in preference to eating them under the confinement of the hall), and frequently seize the bread from the hands of the children, unless narrowly watched by the servants, or deterred by the pellet-bow. And at the season of building their nests, these birds will plunder from the habitations of man, whatever may be met with likely to make a soft lining for their nests; often, I am told, carrying off the skull-cap from the children's heads, and the women's pieces of calico or muslin from their laps when seated in the open air at work.

Many of the Natives are strongly attached to the brutal practice of cock-fighting; they are very choice in their breed of that gallant bird, and pride themselves on possessing the finest specimens in the world. The gay young men expend much money in these low contests: the birds are fought with or without artificial spurs, according to the views of the contending parties.[17] They have also a small bird which they call 'the buttaire',[18] a species of quail, which I hear are most valiant combatants; they are fed and trained for sport with much care and attention. I am told these poor little birds, when once brought to the contest, fight until they die. Many are the victims sacrificed to one mornings amusement of their cruel owners, who wager upon the favourite bird with a spirit and interest equal to that which may be found in more polished countries among the gentlemen of the turf.

Horse-racing has very lately been introduced at Lucknow, but I fancy the Natives have not yet acquired sufficient taste for the sport to take any great delight in it. As long as it is fashionable with European society, so long it may be viewed with comparative interest by the few. But their views of the breed and utility of a stud differ so much from those of a European, that there is but little probability of the sport of horse-racing ever becoming a favourite amusement with them,[19] When they are disposed to hunt, it is always on elephants, both for security and to save fatigue.

A horse of the finest temper, form, or breed, one that would be counted the most perfect animal by an English connoisseur, would be rejected by a Native if it possessed the slightest mark by them deemed 'unfortunate'. If the legs are not all of a colour, the horse is not worthy; if an unlucky turn of the hair, or a serpentine wave of another colour appears on any part of the animal, it is an 'omen of ill-luck' to the possessor, and must not be retained on the premises. A single blemish of the sort would be deemed by a Native gentleman as great a fault in an otherwise perfect animal, as if it could only move on three legs. The prejudice is so strongly grounded in their minds to these trifling marks, that they would not keep such horses in their stables one hour, even if it belonged to their dearest friend, fearing the evil consequences that might befall their house.[20]

The swiftness of a good English hunter would be no recommendation to a Native gentleman; he rides for pleasant exercise and amusement, and the pace therefore never exceeds the gentlest canter of an English lady's jennet. Many of their horses are trained to

a pace I have never remarked in other countries; it is more than a walk but not quite a canter, the steps are taken very short, and is, I am assured, an agreeable exercise to the rider. I was once in possession of a strong hill pony, whose walk was as quick as the swiftest elephant; very few horses could keep up with him at a trot. The motion was very easy and agreeable, particularly suited to invalids in that trying climate.

The Native method of confining horses in their sheds or stables appears somewhat remarkable to a European. The halter is staked in the ground, and the two hind legs have a rope fastened to each; this is also staked in the ground behind. The ropes are left sufficiently long to allow of the animal lying down at his pleasure.

The food of horses is fresh grass, brought from the jungles daily, by the grass-cutters, who are kept solely for this purpose. In consequence of these men having to walk a distance of four or more miles before they reach the jungles, and the difficulty of finding sufficient grass when there, one man cannot procure more grass in a day than will suffice for one horse; the consequence is, that if a gentleman keep twenty horses, there are forty men to attend them; viz., twenty grooms, and as many grass-cutters. The grass of India, excepting only during the rainy season, is burnt up by the heat of the sun, in all exposed situations. In the jungles and forests of mango-trees, wherever there is any shade, the men search for grass, which is of a different species to any I have seen in Europe, called doob-grass,[21] a dwarf creeper, common throughout India; every other kind of grass is rejected by the horse; they would rather eat chaff in the absence of the doob-grass. The refuse of the grass given for food, answers the purpose of bedding; for in India straw is never brought into use, but as food for the cows, buffaloes, and oxen. The nature of straw is friable in India, perhaps induced by climate by the wise ordering of Divine Providence, of which indeed a reflecting mind must be convinced, since it is so essential an article for food to the cattle where grass is very scarce, excepting only during the season of rain.

When the corn is cut, the whole produce of a field is brought to one open spot, where the surface of the ground is hard and smooth; the oxen and their drivers trample in a continued circuit over the whole mass, until the corn is not only threshed from the husks, but the straw broken into fine chaff. They winnow it with their coarse blankets, or chuddahs[22] (the usual wrapper of a Native, resembling a coarse sheet), and house the separate articles in pits, dug in the earth, close to their habitations. Such things as barns, granaries, or stacks, are never seen to mark the abode of the Native farmers as in Europe.

An invading party could never discover the deposits of corn, whilst the Natives chose to keep their own secret. This method of depositing the corn and chaff in the earth, is the only secure way of preserving these valuable articles from the encroachment of white ants, whose visits to the grain are nearly as destructive, and quite as much dreaded, as the flights of locusts to the green blades.

The corn in general use for horses, sheep, and cattle, in called gram;[23] the flavour resembles our field pea much more than grain. It is produced on creepers, with pods; and bears a pretty lilac blossom, not unlike peas, or rather vetches, but smaller; the grain, however, is as large as a pea, irregularly shaped, of a dark brown skin, and pale yellow

within. There are several other kinds of grain in use amongst the Natives for the use of cattle; one called moat,[24] of an olive green colour. It is considered very cooling in its nature, at certain seasons of the year, and is greatly preferred both for young horses and for cows giving milk.

Horses are subject to an infectious disease, which generally makes its appearance in the rainy season, and therefore called burrhsaatie.[25] Once in the stable, the disorder prevails through the stud, unless timely precautions are taken to prevent them being infected—removal from the stable is the most usual mode adopted—so easy is the infection conveyed from one animal to the other, that if the groom of the sick horse enters the stable of the healthy they rarely escape contagion. It is a tedious and painful disorder and in nine cases out of ten the infected animal either dies, or is rendered useless for the saddle. The legs break out in ulcers, and, I am informed, without the greatest care on the part of the groom, he is also liable to imbibe the corruption; if he has any cut or scratch on his hands, the disease may be received as by inoculation.

The Natives have the greatest aversion to docked-tailed horses, and will never permit the animals to be shorn of the beauty with which Nature has adorned them, either in length or fulness; besides which, they think it a barbarous want of taste in those who differ from them, though they fancy Nature is improved when the long tail and mane of a beautiful white Arab are dyed with mayndhie; his legs, up to the knees, stained with the same colour, and divers stars, crescents, &c., painted on the haunches, chest, and throat of the pretty gentle creature.[26]

When the horses are looking rough, the Natives feed them with a mixture of coarse brown sugar and ghee, which they say gives sleekness to the skin, and improves the constitution of the horse. When their horses grow old, they boil the gram with which they feed them, to make it easy of digestion; very few people, indeed, give corn at any age to the animal unsoaked, as they consider it injudicious to give dry corn to horses, which swells in the stomach of the animal and cannot digest: the grain swells exceedingly by soaking, and thus moistened, the horse requires less water than would be necessary with dry corn.

The numberless Native sports I have heard related in this country would take me too long to repeat at present; describe them I could not, for my feelings and views are at variance with the painful tortures inflicted on the brute creation for the perverted amusements of man, consisting of many unequal contests, which have sickened me to think they were viewed by mortals with pleasure or satisfaction. A poor unoffending antelope or stag, perhaps confined from the hour of its quitting its dam in a paddock, turned out in a confined space to the fury of a cheetah[27] (leopard) to make his morning's repast. Tigers and elephants are often made to combat for the amusement of spectators; also, tigers and buffaloes, or alligators. The battle between intoxicated elephants is a sport suited only for the cruel-hearted, and too often indulged. The mahouts[28] (the men who sit as drivers on the neck of the elephant) have frequently been the victims of the ignoble amusement of their noble masters; indeed, the danger they are exposed to is so great, that to escape is deemed a miracle. The fighting-elephants are males, and they are prepared for the sport

by certain drugs mixed up with the wax from the human ear. The method of training elephants for fighting must be left to abler hands to describe. I have passed by places where the animal was firmly chained to a tree, in situations remote from the population of a city, as danger is always anticipated from their vicinity; and when one of these infuriated beasts break from their bonds, serious accidents often occur to individuals before they can again be secured.

Amongst the higher classes tigers and leopards are retained for field sports, under the charge of regular keepers. In many instances these wild inhabitants of the jungle are tamed to the obedience of dogs, or other domestic animals. I have often seen the young cubs sucking the teats of a goat, with which they play as familiarly as a kitten with its mother. A very intimate acquaintance of ours has several tigers and leopards, which are perfectly obedient to his command; they are led out by their keepers night and morning, but he always feeds them with his own hands, that he may thereby make them obedient to himself, when he sports in the jungles, which he often does with success, bringing home stags and antelopes to grace the board, and distribute amongst his English friends.

The tigers and cheetahs are very generally introduced after breakfast, when Native noblemen have European visitors. I remember on one of these occasions, these animals were brought into the banqueting-room, just as the self-performing cabinet organ had commenced a grand overture. The creatures' countenances were terrifying to the beholder, and one in particular could with great difficulty be reined in by his keepers. The Natives are, however, so accustomed to the society of tigers, that they smiled at my apprehension of mischief. I was only satisfied when they were forced away from the sounds that seemed to fill them with wonder, and perhaps with rage.

Pigeon-shooting is another amusement practised among the sporting men of Hindoostaun. I, of course, allude to the Mussulmauns, for most Hindoos hold it criminal to kill a crow, or even the meanest insect; and I have known them carry the principle of preserving life to the minutest insects, wearing crape or muslin over their mouths and noses in the open air, fearing a single animalcule that floats in the air should be destroyed by their breath. For the same reason, these men have every drop of water strained through muslin before it is used either for drinking or for cooking.[29]

There are people who make it a profitable means of subsistence to visit the jungles with nets, in order to collect birds, as pigeons, parrots, minas, &c.; these are brought in covered baskets to the towns, where they meet with a ready sale.

Many a basket have I delighted in purchasing, designing to rescue the pretty creatures from present danger. I am annoyed whenever I see birds immured in cages. If they could be trained to live with us, enjoying the same liberty, I should gladly court society with these innocent creatures; but a bird confined vexes me, my fingers itch to open the wicket and give the prisoner liberty. How have I delighted in seeing the pretty variegated parrots, minas, and pigeons fly from the basket when opened in my verandah! I have sometimes fancied in my evening walk that I could recognize the birds again in the gardens and grounds, which had been set at liberty in the morning by my hand.

The good ladies of India, from whom I have copied the practice of giving liberty to the captive birds, although different motives direct the action, believe, that if a member of their family is ill, such a release propitiates the favour of Heavenly mercy towards them.[30] A sovereign (amongst the Mussulmauns) will give liberty to a certain number of prisoners, confined in the common gaol, when he is anxious for the recovery of a sick member of his family; and so great is the merit of mercy esteemed in the creature to his fellow-mortal, that the birth of a son, a recovery from severe illness, accession to the throne, &c., are the precursors to royal clemency, when all prisoners are set at liberty whose return to society may not be deemed cruelty to the individual, or a calamity to his neighbours. I may here remark, the Mussulmaun laws do not allow of men being confined in prison for debt.[31] The government of Oude is absolute, yet to its praise be it said, during the first eight years of my sojourn I never heard of but one execution by the King's command; and that was for crimes of the greatest enormity, where to have been sparing would have been unjust.[32] In cases of crime such as murder, the nearest relative surviving is appealed to by the court of justice; if he demand the culprit's life, the court cannot save him from execution. But it is rarely demanded; they are by no means a revengeful people generally; there are ambitious, cruel tyrants to be found, but these individuals are exceptions to the mass of the people. Examples of mercy set by the King in all countries have an influence upon his subjects; and here the family of a murdered man, if poor, is maintained by the guilty party or else relieved by royal munificence, as the case may require. Acts of oppression may sometimes occur in Native States without the knowledge even, and much less by the command, of the Sovereign ruler, since the good order of the government mainly depends on the disposition of the Prime Minister for the time being. There is no check placed in the constitution of a Native government between the Prime Minister and his natural passions. If cruel, ambitious, or crafty, he practises all his art to keep his master in ignorance of his daily enormities; if the Prime Minister be a virtuous-minded person, he is subjected to innumerable trials, from the wiles of the designing and the ambitious, who strive by intrigue to root him from the favour and confidence of his sovereign, under the hope of acquiring for themselves the power they covet by his removal from office.

[1] When, a boy is born, the midwife, in order to avert the Evil Eye and evil spirits, says: 'It is only a girl blind of one eye!' If a girl is born, the fact is stated, because she excites no jealousy, and is thus protected from spirit attacks.

[2] This is intended to scare evil spirits, but has become a mere form of announcing the joyful event.

[3] After the first bath pieces of black thread are tied round the child's wrist and ankle as protection.

[4] *Amaltas, Cassia fistula*

[5] The purgative draught (*guthl*) is usually made of aniseed, myro-bolans, dried red rose leaves, senna, and the droppings of mice or goats.—*Bombay Gazetteer*, ix, part ii, 153.

[6] *Gudri*.

[7] *Ta'awiz*.

[8] Among the Khojahs of Bombay a stool is placed near the mother's bed, and as each, of the female relatives comes in she strews a little rice on the stool, lays on the ground a gold or silver anklet as a gift for the child, and bending over mother and baby, passes her hands over them, and cracks her finger-joints against her own temples, in order to take all their ill luck upon herself.—*Bombay Gazetteer*, ix, part ii, 45.

[9] *Duli*: see p. 184.

[10] *Salgirah* or *barasganth*, 'year-knot'.

[11] *Gardani*.

[12] P. 36.

[13] The Mahomedans are very keen on breeding pigeons in large numbers; they make them fly all together, calling out, whistling, and waving with a cloth fastened to the end of a stick, running and making signals from the terraced roofs, with a view of encouraging the pigeons to attack the flock of some one else…. Every owner is overjoyed in seeing his own pigeons the most dexterous in misleading their opponents.'—Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, i. 107 f.

[14] *Mugdar*.

[15] *Rohu*, a kind of carp, *Labeo rohita*.

[16] The use of the bow and arrow has now disappeared in northern India, and survives only among some of the jungle tribes.

[17] A curious relic of the custom of cock-fighting at Lucknow survives in the picture by Zoffany of the famous match between the Nawab Asaf-ud-daula and Col. Mordaunt in 1786. The figures in the picture are portraits of the celebrities at the Court of Oudh, whose names are given by Smith, *Catalogue of British Mezzotint Portrait*, i. 273.

[18] *Bater, Coturnix communis*.

[19] Lucknow is now an important racing centre, and the Civil Service Cup for ponies has been won several times by native gentlemen.

[20] The feather or curl is one of the most important marks. If it faces towards the head, this is a horse to buy; if it points towards the tail, it is a 'female snake' (*sampan*), a bad blemish, as is a small star on the forehead. A curl at the bottom of the throat is very lucky, and cancels other blemishes. A piebald horse or one with five white points, a white

face and four white stockings, is highly valued. The European who understands the rules can often buy an 'unlucky' horse at a bargain.

[21] *Dub, Cynodon Dactylon*.

[22] *Chadar*.

[23] *Cicer arietinum*: the word comes from Port, *grão*, a grain.

[24] *Moth*, the aconite-leaved kidney-bean, *Phaseolus aconitifolius*.

[25] *Barsati* from *barsat*, the rainy season; a pustular eruption breaking out on the head and fore parts of the body.

[26] The Native gentleman's charger, with his trained paces, his henna-stained crimson mane, tail, and fetlocks, is a picturesque sight now less common than it used to be.

[27] *Chita*, the hunting leopard. *Felis jubata*.

[28] *Mahawat*, originally meaning 'a high officer'.

[29] This specially applies to the Jain ascetics, who keep a brush to remove insects from their path, and cover their mouths with linen.

[30] A common piece of imitative magic: as the bird flies away it carries the disease with it. The practice of releasing prisoners when the King or a member of his family was sick, or as a thanksgiving on recovery, was common.—Sleeman, *Journey*, ii. 41.

[31] This is incorrect. Imprisonment for debt is allowed by Muhammadan Law.—Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 82.

[32] This gives a too favourable account of the administration of justice in Oudh. 'A powerful landlord during the Nawabi could evict a tenant, or enhance his rent, or take away his wife from him, or cut his head off, with as much, or as little, likelihood of being called to account by Na zim or Chakladar for one act as for another' (H.C. Irwin, *The Garden of India*, 258). Gen. Sleeman points out that Musalmans wore practically immune from the death penalty, particularly if they happened to kill a Sunni. A Hindu, consenting after conviction to become a Musalman, was also immune (*Journey Through Oudh*, i. 135). Executions used constantly to occur in Lucknow under Nasir-ud-din (W. Knighton, *Private Life of an Eastern King*, 104).

LETTER XVI

Remarks on the trades and professions of Hindoostaun.—The Bazaars.—Naunbye (Bazaar cook).—The Butcher, and other trades.—Shroffs (Money-changers).—Popular cries in Native cities.—The articles enumerated and the venders of them described.—The Cuppers.—Leechwomen.—Ear-cleaners.—Old silver.—Pickles.—Confectionery.—Toys.—Fans.—Vegetables and fruit.—Mangoes.—Melons.—Melon-cyder.—Fish.—Bird-catcher.—The Butcher-bird, the Coel, and Lollah.—Fireworks.—Parched corn.—Wonder-workers.—Snakes.—Anecdote of the Moonshie and the Snake-catcher.—The Cutler.—Sour curds.—Clotted cream.—Butter.—Singular process of the Natives in making butter.—Ice.—How procured in India.—Ink.—All writing dedicated to God by the Mussulmauns.—The reverence for the name of God.—The Mayndhie and Sulmah.

The various trades of a Native city in Hindoostaun are almost generally carried on in the open air. The streets are narrow, and usually unpaved; the dukhauns[1] (shops) small, with the whole front open towards the street; a tattie[2] of coarse grass forming an awning to shelter the shopkeeper and his goods from the weather. In the long lines of dukhauns the open fronts exhibit to the view the manufacturer, the artisan, the vender, in every variety of useful and ornamental articles for general use and consumption. In one may be seen the naunbye[3] (bazaar cook) basting keebaubs[3] over a charcoal fire on the ground with one hand, and beating off the flies with a bunch of date-leaves in the other; beside him may be seen assistant cooks kneading dough for sheermaul[3] or other bread, or superintending sundry kettles and cauldrons of currie, pillau, matunjun,[3] &c., whilst others are equally active in preparing platters and trays, in order to forward the delicacies at the appointed hour to some great assembly.

The shop adjoining may probably be occupied by a butcher, his meat exposed for sale in little lean morsels carefully separated from every vestige of fat[4] or skin; the butcher's assistant is occupied in chopping up the coarser pieces of lean meat into mince meat.[5] Such shops as these are actually in a state of siege by the flies; there is, however, no remedy for the butcher but patience; his customers always wash their meat before it is cooked, so he never fails to sell even with all these disadvantages. But it is well for the venders of more delicate articles when neither of these fly-attracting emporiums are next door neighbours, or immediately opposite; yet if it even should be so, the merchant will bear with equanimity an evil he cannot control, and persuade his customers for silver shoes or other ornamental articles, that if they are not tarnished a fly spit or two cannot lessen their value.

The very next door to a working goldsmith may be occupied by a weaver of muslin; the first with his furnace and crucible, the latter with his loom, in constant employ. Then the snake-hookha manufacturer,[6] opposed to a mixer of tobacco, aiding each other's trade in their separate articles. The makers and venders of punkahs of all sorts and sizes, children's toys, of earth, wood, or lakh; milk and cream shops; jewellers, mercers, druggists selling tea, with other medicinal herbs. The bunyah[7] (corn-dealer) with large open baskets of sugar and flour, whose whiteness resembles each other so narrowly, that he is sometimes suspected of mixing the two articles by mistake, when certain sediments in sherbet indicate adulterated sugar.

It would take me too long were I to attempt enumerating all the varieties exposed in a Native street of shops. It may be presumed these people make no mystery of their several arts in manufacturing, by their choice of situation for carrying on their trades. The confectioner, for instance, prepares his dainties in despite of dust and flies, and pass by at what hour of the day you please, his stoves are hot, and the sugar simmering with ghee sends forth a savour to the air, inviting only to those who delight in the delicacies he prepares in countless varieties.

The most singular exhibitions in these cities are the several shroffs[8] (money-changers, or bankers), dispersed in every public bazaar, or line of shops. These men, who are chiefly Hindoos, and whose credit may perhaps extend throughout the continent of Asia for any reasonable amount, take their station in this humble line of buildings, having on their right and left, piles of copper coins and cowries.[9] These shroffs are occupied the whole day in exchanging pice for rupees or rupees for pice, selling or buying gold mohurs, and examining rupees; and to all such demands upon him he is entitled to exact a regulated per centage, about half a pice in a rupee. Small as this sum may seem yet the profits produce a handsome remuneration for his day's attention, as many thousands of rupees may have passed under his critical eye for examination, it being a common practice, both with shopkeepers and individuals, to send their rupees to the shroff for his inspection, always fearing imposition from the passers of base coin. These shroffs transact remittances to any part of India by hoondies,[10] which are equivalent to our bills of exchange, and on which the usual demand is two and a half per cent at ninety days, if required for any distant station.

The European order is here completely reversed, for the shopkeeper sits whilst the purchasers are compelled to stand. The bazaar merchant is seated on the floor of his dukhaun, near enough to the open front to enable him to transact business with his customers, who, one and all, stand in the street to examine the goods and to be served; let the weather be bad or good, none are admitted within the threshold of the dukhaun. In most places the shops are small, and look crowded with the articles for sale, and those where manufactories are carried on have not space to spare to their customers.

Very few gentlemen condescend to make their own purchases; they generally employ their confidential domestic to go to market for them; and with the ladies their women servants are deputed. In rich families it is an office of great trust, as they expend large sums and might be much imposed upon were their servants faithless. The servants always claim dustoor[11] (custom) from the shopkeepers, of one pice for every rupee they lay out; and when the merchants are sent for to the houses with their goods, the principal servant in the family is sure to exact his dustoor from the merchant; and this is often produced only after a war of words between the crafty and the thrifty.

The diversity of cries from those who hawk about their goods and wares in streets and roadways, is a feature in the general economy of the Natives not to be overlooked in my brief description of their habits. The following list of daily announcements by the several sonorous claimants on the public attention, may not be unacceptable with their translated accompaniments.

'Seepie wallah deelie sukha'[12] (Moist or dry cuppers).—Moist and dry cupping is performed both by men and women; the latter are most in request. They carry their instruments about with them, and traverse all parts of the city. The dry cupping is effected by a buffalo's horn and resorted to by patients suffering under rheumatic pains, and often in cases of fever, when to lose blood is either inconvenient on account of the moon's age, or not desirable by reason of the complaint or constitution of the patient.

'Jonk, or keerah luggarny wallie'[13] (The woman with leeches).—Women with leeches attend to apply the required remedy, and are allowed to take away the leeches after they have done their office. These women by a particular pressure on the leech oblige it to disgorge the blood, when they immediately place it in fresh water; by this practice the leeches continue healthy, and may be brought to use again the following day if required.

'Kaan sarf kerna wallah'[14] (Ear-cleaner).—The cleansing of ears is chiefly performed by men, who collecting this article make great profits from the sale of it, independent of the sums obtained from their employers. It is the chief ingredient in use for intoxicating elephants previous to the furious contests so often described as the amusement of Native Courts.

'Goatah chandnie bickhow'[15] (Sell your old silver trimmings).—The several articles of silver trimmings are invariably manufactured of the purest metal without any alloy, and when they have served their first purposes the old silver procures its weight in current rupees.

'Tale kee archah wallah'[16] (Oil pickles).—The method of pickling in oil is of all others in most request with the common people, who eat the greasy substance as a relish to their bread and dhall. The mustard-oil used in the preparation of this dainty is often preferred to ghee in curries.

The better sort of people prefer water pickle, which is made in most families during the hot and dry weather by a simple method; exposure to the sun being the chemical process to the parboiled carrots, turnips, radishes, &c., immersed in boiling water, with red pepper, green ginger, mustard-seed, and garlic. The flavour of this water pickle is superior to any other acid, and possesses the property of purifying the blood.

'Mittie wallah'[17] (Man with sweetmeats).—The many varieties of sweetmeats, or rather confectionery, in general estimation with the natives, are chiefly composed of sugar and ghee, prepared in countless ways, with occasional additions of cocoa-nut, pistachias, cardimuns, rose-water, &c., and constantly hawked about the streets on trays by men.

'Kallonie wallah'[18] (Man with toys).—Toys of every kind, of which no country in the world I suppose exhibits greater variety, in wood, lakh, uberuck[19] (tulk), paper, bamboo, clay, &c., are constantly cried in the streets and roadways of a Native city.

'Punkah wallah'[20] (Vender of fans).—The punkahs are of all descriptions in general use, their shape and material varying with taste and circumstances, the general form

resembling hand-screens: they are made for common use of date-leaf, platted as the common mats are; some are formed of a single leaf from the tor[21]-tree, large or small, the largest would cover a tolerable sized round table; many have painted figures and devices, and from their lightness may be waved by children without much labour. I have seen very pretty punkahs made of sweet-scented flowers over a frame of bamboo. This, however, is a temporary indulgence, as the flowers soon lose their fragrance.

'Turkaaree', 'Mayvour'[22] (The first is vegetables; the last, fruit).—Vegetables of every kind and many sorts of fruits are carried about by men and women, who describe the name and quality of the articles they have to sell. It would occupy too large a space to enumerate here the several productions, indigenous and foreign, of the vegetable world in India. The Natives in their cookery, use every kind of vegetable and fruit in its unripe state. Two pounds of meat is in general all that is required to form a meal for twenty people, and with this they will cook several dishes by addition of as many different sorts of vegetables.

Herbs, or green leaves, are always denominated saag,[23] these are produced at all seasons of the year, in many varieties; the more substantial vegetables, as potatoes, turnips, carrots, &c., are called turkaaree.

The red and green spinach is brought to the market throughout the year, and a rich-flavoured sorrel, so delicious in curries, is cultivated in most months. Green peas, or, indeed, vegetables in general, are never served in the plain way in which we see them at our tables, but always in stews or curries. The green mango is used invariably to flavour their several dishes, and, at the proper season, they are peeled, cut, and dried for the year's consumption. They dislike the acid of the lemon in their stews, which is never resorted to when the green mango or tamarind can be procured.

The fruits of India in general estimation with the Natives are the mango and the melon. Mangoes are luscious and enticing fruit; the Natives eat them to an excess when they have been some hours soaked in water, which, they say, takes away from the fruit its detrimental quality; without this preparatory precaution those who indulge in a feast of mango are subject to fevers, and an increase of prickly heat, (a fiery irritable rash, which few persons are exempt from, more or less, in the hot weather); even biles, which equally prevail, are less troublesome to those persons who are careful only to eat mangoes that have been well soaked in water. The Natives have a practice, which is common among all classes, and therefore worthy the notice of foreigners, of drinking milk immediately after eating mangoes. It should be remembered that they never eat their fruit after dinner, nor do they at any time indulge in wine, spirits, or beer.

The mango in appearance and flavour has no resemblance to any of the fruits of England; they vary in weight from half an ounce to half a seer, nearly a pound; the skin is smooth, tough, and of the thickness of leather, strongly impregnated with a flavour of turpentine; the colour, when ripe, is grass green, or yellow in many shades, with occasional tinges and streaks of bright red; the pulp is as juicy as our wall-fruit, and the kernel protected by a hard shell, to which fine strong silky fibres are firmly attached. The kernel of the mango

is of a hot and rather offensive flavour; the poor people, however, collect it, and when dried grind it into flour for bread, which is more wholesome than agreeable; in seasons of scarcity, however, it is a useful addition to the then scanty means of the lower orders of the people. The flavour of the fruit itself differs so much, that no description can be given of the taste of a mango—even the fruit of one tree vary in their flavour. A tope (orchard) of mango-trees is a little fortune to the possessor, and when in bloom a luxurious resort to the lovers of Nature.

The melon is cultivated in fields with great ease and little labour, due care always being taken to water the plants in their early growth. The varieties are countless, but the kind most esteemed, and known only in the Upper Provinces, are called chitlahs,[24] from their being spotted green on a surface of bright yellow; the skin is smooth and of the thickness of that of an apple; the fruit weighing from half-a-pound to three pounds. The flavour may be compared to our finest peaches, partaking of the same moist quality, and literally melting in the mouth.

The juice of the melon makes a delicious cider; I once tried the experiment with success. The Natives being prohibited from the use of all fermented liquors, I was induced by that consideration to be satisfied with the one experiment; but with persons who are differently situated the practice might be pursued with very little trouble, and a rich beverage produced, much more healthy than the usual arrack that is now distilled, to the deterioration of the health and morals of the several classes under the British rule, who are prone to indulge in the exhilarating draughts of fermented liquors.

At present my list of the indigenous vegetables of India must be short; so great, however, is the variety in Hindoostaun, both in their quality and properties, and so many are the benefits derived from their several uses in this wonderful country, that at some future time I may be induced to follow, with humility, in the path trodden by the more scientific naturalists who have laboured to enrich the minds of mankind by their researches.

The natives are herbalists in their medical practice. The properties of minerals are chiefly studied with the view to become the lucky discoverer of the means of transmuting metals; seldom with reference to their medicinal qualities. Quicksilver, however, in its unchanged state, is sometimes taken to renew the constitution.[25] One gentleman, whom I well knew, commenced with a single grain, increasing the number progressively, until his daily close was the contents of a large table-spoon; he certainly appeared to have benefited by the practice, for his appetite and spirits were those of a man at thirty, when he had counted eighty years.

'Muchullee'[26] (Fish).—Fish of several kinds are caught in the rivers and tanks; the flavour I can hardly describe, for, since I knew the practice of the Hindoos of throwing their dead bodies into the rivers the idea of fish as an article of food was too revolting to my taste. The Natives, however, have none of these qualms; even the Hindoos enjoy a currie of fish as a real delicacy, although it may be presumed some of their friends or neighbours have aided that identical fish in becoming a delicacy for the table.

There are some kinds of fish forbidden by the Mussulmaun law, which are, of course, never brought to their kitchens, as the eel, or any other fish having a smooth skin;[27] all sorts of shell-fish are likewise prohibited by their code. Those fish which have scales are the only sort allowable to them for food.

The rooey[28] is a large fish, and in Native families is much admired for its rich flavour; the size is about that of a salmon, the shape that of a carp; the flesh is white, and not unlike the silver mullet. The scales of this fish are extremely useful; which, on a tolerable sized fish, are in many parts as large as a crown-piece, and of a substance firmer than horn. It is not uncommon to see a suit of armour formed of these scales, which, they affirm, will turn the edge of the best metal, and from its lightness, compared with the chain armour, more advantageous to the wearer, though the appearance is not so agreeable to the eye.

'Chirryah wallah'[29] (Bird-man).—The bird-catcher cries his live birds fresh caught from the jungles: they seldom remain long on hand. I have before described the practice of letting off the birds, in cases of illness, as propitiatory sacrifices. The Natives take delight in petting talking-birds, minas and parrots particularly; and the bull-bull,[30] the subzah,[31] and many others for their sweet songs.

The numberless varieties of birds I have seen in India, together with their qualities, plumage, and habits, would occupy too much of my time at present to describe. I will here only remark a few of the most singular as they appeared to me. The butcher-bird,[32] so called from its habit, is known to live on seeds; yet it caters for the mina and others of the carnivorous feathered family, by collecting grasshoppers, which they convey in the beak to the thorny bushes, and there fix them on sharp thorns, (some of which are nearly two inches in length), and would almost seem to have been formed by Nature for this use only. The mina[33] follows his little friend's flight as if in the full assurance of the feast prepared for him.

The coel[34] is a small black bird, of extreme beauty in make and plumage; this bird's note is the harbinger of rain, and although one of the smallest of the feathered race, it is heard at a considerable distance.[35] The coel's food is simply the suction from the petals of sweet-scented flowers.

The lollah,[36] known to many by the name of haverdewatt, is a beautiful little creature, about one-third the size of a hedge sparrow. The great novelty in this pretty bird is, that the spots of white on its brown plumage change to a deep red at the approach of the rainy season; the Natives keep them by dozens in cages with a religious veneration, as their single note describes one of the terms in use to express an attribute of the Almighty.

But enough—I must hasten to finish my list of popular cries by the Indian pedlars, who roar out their merchandize and their calling to the inmates of dwellings bounded by high walls, whose principal views of the works of Nature and art are thus aided by those casual criers of the day.

'Artush-baajie'[37] (Fireworks).—Fireworks are considered here to be very well made, and the Native style much extolled by foreigners; every year they add some fresh novelty to their amusing pastime. They are hawked about at certain seasons, particularly at the Holie[38] (a festival of the Hindoos,) and the Shubh-burraat[39] of the Mussulmauns. Saltpetre being very reasonable, fireworks are sold for a small price. Most of the ingenious young men exercise their inventive powers to produce novelties in fireworks for any great season of rejoicing in their families.

'Chubbaynee'[40] (Parched corn).—The corn of which we have occasionally specimens in English gardens, known by the name of Indian corn, is here used as a sort of intermediate meal, particularly amongst the labouring classes, who cook but once a day, and that when the day's toil is over. This corn is placed in a sort of furnace with sand, and kept constantly moved about. By this process it is rendered as white as magnesia, crisp, and of a sweet flavour; a hungry man could not eat more than half-a-pound of this corn at once, yet it is not as nutritious as barley or wheat. I have never heard that the Natives use this corn for making bread.

'Tumaushbeen'[41] (Wonder-workers).—This call announces the rope-dancers and sleight-of-hand company; eating fire, swallowing pen-knives, spinning coloured yarn through the nose, tricks with cups and balls, and all the arts of the well-known jugglers. I have seen both men and women attached to these travelling companies perform extraordinary feats of agility and skill, also most surprising vaultings, by the aid of bamboos, and a frightful method of whirling round on the top of a pole or mast. This pole is from twenty to thirty feet high; on the top is a swivel hook, which fastens to a loop in a small piece of wood tied fast to the middle of the performer, who climbs the pole without any assistance, and catches the hook to the loop; at first he swings himself round very gently, but increasing gradually in swiftness, until the velocity is equal to that of a wheel set in motion by steam. This feat is sometimes continued for ten or fifteen minutes together, when his strength does not fail him; but it is too frightful a performance to give pleasure to a feeling audience.

'Samp-wallah'[42] (Snake-catchers).—These men blow a shrill pipe in addition to calling out the honourable profession of snake-catcher. I fancy it is all pretence with these fellows; if they catch a snake on the premises, it is probably one they have let loose secretly, and which they have tutored to come and go at the signal given: they profess to draw snakes from their hiding-place, and make a good living by duping the credulous.

The best proof I can offer of the impositions practised by these men on the weakness and credulity of their neighbours, may be conveyed in the following anecdote, with which I have been favoured by a very intelligent Mussulmaun gentleman, on whom the cheat was attempted during my residence in his neighbourhood at Lucknow.

'Moonshie Sahib,[43] as he is familiarly called by his friends, was absent from home on a certain day, during which period his wife and family fancied they heard the frightful sound of a snake, apparently as if it was very near to them in the compound (court-yard) of the zeenahnah. They were too much alarmed to venture from the hall to the compound

to satisfy themselves or take steps to destroy the intruder if actually there. Whilst in this state of mental torture it happened (as they thought very fortunately) that a snake-catcher's shrill pipe was heard at no great distance, to whom a servant was sent; and when the ladies had shut themselves up securely in their purdahed apartment, the men servants were desired to introduce the samp-wallahs into the compound, to search for and secure this enemy to their repose.

'The snake-catcher made, to all appearance, a very minute scrutiny into every corner or aperture of the compound, as if in search of the reptile's retreat; and at last a moderate sized snake was seen moving across the open space in an opposite direction to the spot they were intent on examining. The greatest possible satisfaction was of course expressed by the whole of the servants and slaves assembled; the lady of the house was more than gratified at the reported success of "the charmers" and sent proofs of her gratitude to the men in a sum of money, proportioned to her sense of the service rendered on the occasion; the head samp-wallah placed the snake in his basket, (they always carry a covered basket about with them) and they departed well satisfied with the profits of this day's employment.

'The Moonshie says, he returned home soon after, and listened to his wife's account of the event of the morning, and her warm commendation of the skilful samp-wallahs; but although the servants confirmed all the lady had told her husband of the snake-charmers' diligence, still he could not but believe that these idle fellows had practised an imposition on his unwary lady by their pretended powers in charming the snake. But here it rested for the time; he could not decide without an opportunity of witnessing the samp-wallahs at their employment, which he resolved to do the next convenient opportunity.

'As might have been anticipated, the very same snake-catcher and his attendant returned to the Moonshie's gateway a very few days after their former success; Moonshie Sahib was at home, and, concealing his real intentions, he gave orders that the two men should be admitted; on their entrance, he said to them, "You say you can catch snakes; now, friends, if any of the same family remain of which you caught one the other day in this compound, I beg you will have the civility to draw them out from their hiding-places."[44]

'The Moonshie watched the fellows narrowly, that they might not have a chance of escaping detection, if it was, as he had always suspected, that the snakes are first let loose by the men, who pretend to attract them from their hiding-places. The two men being bare-headed, and in a state of almost perfect nudity (the common usage of the very lowest class of Hindoo labourers), wearing only a small wrapper which could not contain, he thought, the least of this class of reptiles, he felt certain there could not now be any deception.

'The samp-wallah and his assistant, pretending to search every hole and crevice of the compound, seemed busy and anxious in their employment, which occupied them for a long time without success. Tired at last with the labour, the men sat down on the ground

to rest; the pipe was resorted to, with which they pretend to attract the snake; this was, however, sounded again and again, without the desired effect.

'From the apparent impossibility of any cheat being practised on him, the Moonshie rather relaxed in his strict observance of the men: he had turned his back but for an instant only, when the two fellows burst out in an ecstasy of delight, exclaiming, "They are come! they are come!"—and on the Moonshie turning quickly round, he was not a little staggered to find three small snakes on the ground, at no great distance from the men, who, he was convinced, had not moved from the place. They seemed to have no dread of the reptiles, and accounted for it by saying they were invulnerable to the snakes' venom; the creatures were then fearlessly seized one by one by the men, and finally deposited in their basket.

'"They appear very tame," thought the Moonshie, as he observed the men's actions: "I am outwitted at last, I believe, with all my boasted vigilance; but I will yet endeavour to find them out.—Friend," said he aloud, "here is your reward," holding the promised money towards the principal; "take it, and away with you both; the snakes are mine, and I shall not allow you to remove them hence."

'"Why, Sahib," replied the man, "what will you do with the creatures? they cannot be worth your keeping; besides, it is the dustoor[45] (custom); we always have the snakes we catch for our perquisite."—"It is of no consequence to you, friend, how I may dispose of the snakes," said the Moonshie; "I am to suppose they have been bred in my house, and having done no injury to my people, I may be allowed to have respect for their forbearance; at any rate, I am not disposed to part with these guests, who could have injured me if they would."

'The principal samp-wallah, perceiving it was the Moonshie's intention to detain the snakes, in a perfect agony of distress for the loss he was likely to sustain, then commenced by expostulation, ending with threats and abuse, to induce the Moonshie to give them up; who, for his part, kept his temper within bounds, having resolved in his own mind not to be outwitted a second time; the fellow's insolence and impertinent speeches were, therefore, neither chastised nor resented. The samp-wallah strove to wrest the basket from the Moonshie's strong grasp, without succeeding; and when he found his duplicity was so completely exposed, he altered his course, and commenced by entreaties and supplications, confessing at last, with all humility, that the reptiles were his own well-instructed snakes that he had let loose to catch again at pleasure. Then appealing to the Moonshie's well-known charitable temper, besought him that the snakes might be restored, as by their aid he earned his precarious livelihood.

'"That they are yours, I cannot doubt," replied the Moonshie, "and, therefore, my conscience will not allow me to detain them from you; but the promised reward I of course keep back. Your insolence and duplicity deserve chastisement, nevertheless I promise to forgive you, if you will explain to me how you managed to introduce these snakes."

'The man, thankful that he should escape without further loss or punishment, showed the harmless snakes, which, it appears, had been deprived of their fangs and poison, and were so well instructed and docile, that they obeyed their keeper as readily as the best-tutored domestic animal. They coiled up their supple bodies into the smallest compass possible, and allowed their keeper to deposit them each in a separate bag of calico, which was fastened under his wrapper, where it would have been impossible, the Moonshie declares, for the quickest eye to discover that anything was secreted.'

'Sickley ghur'[46] (Cutler and knife-grinder).—These most useful artisans are in great request, polishing articles of rusty steel, giving a new edge to the knives, scissors, razors, or swords of their employer, in a masterly manner, for a very small price.

'Dhie cuttie'[47] (Sour curds).—This article is in great request by scientific cooks, who use it in many of their dainty dishes. The method of making sour curd is peculiarly Indian: it is made of good sweet milk, by some secret process which I could never acquire, and in a few hours the whole is coagulated to a curd of a sharp acidity, that renders it equally useful with other acids in flavouring their curries. The Natives use it with pepper, pounded green ginger, and the shreds of pumpkins or radishes, as a relish to their savoury dishes, in lieu of chatnee; it is considered cooling in its quality, and delicious as an accompaniment to their favourite viands.

'Mullie'[48] (Clotted cream).—-This article is much esteemed by the Natives. I was anxious to know how clotted cream could be procured at seasons when milk from the cow would be sour in a few hours, and am told that the milk when brought in fresh from the dairy is placed over the fire in large iron skillets; the skin (as we call it on boiled milk) is taken off with a skimmer, and placed in a basket, which allows all the milk to be drained from it; the skin again engendered on the surface is taken off in the same way, and so they continue, watching and skimming until the milk has nearly boiled away. This collection of skin is the clotted cream of Hindoostaun.

'Mukhun'[49] (Butter).—Butter is very partially used by the Natives; they use ghee, which is a sort of clarified butter, chiefly produced from the buffalo's milk. The method of obtaining butter in India is singular to a European. The milk is made warm over the fire, then poured into a large earthen jar, and allowed to stand for a few hours. A piece of bamboo is split at the bottom, and four small pieces of wood inserted as stretchers to these splits. A leather strap is twisted over the middle of the bamboo, and the butter-maker with this keeps the bamboo in constant motion; the particles of butter swimming at the top are taken off and thrown into water, and the process of churning is resumed; this method continues until by the quantity collected, these nice judges have ascertained there is no more butter remaining in the milk. When the butter is to be sold, it is beaten up into round balls out of the water. When ghee is intended to be made, the butter is simmered over a slow fire for a given time, and poured into the ghee pot, which perhaps may contain the produce of the week before they convey it to the market for sale; in this state the greasy substance will keep good for months, but in its natural state, as butter, the second day it is offensive to have it in the room, much less to be used as an article of food.

'Burruff wallah'[50] (The man with ice).—The ice is usually carried about in the evening, and considered a great indulgence by the Natives. The ice-men bring round both iced creams, and sherbet ices, in many varieties; some flavoured with oranges, pomegranates, pine-apple, rose-water, &c.

They can produce ices at any season, by saltpetre, which is here abundant and procured at a small price; but strange as it may appear, considering the climate, we have regular collections of ice made in January, in most of the stations in the Upper Provinces, generally under the superintendence of an English gentleman, who condescends to be the comptroller. The expenses are paid by subscribers, who, according to the value of their subscription, are entitled to a given quantity of ice, to be conveyed by each person's servant from the deposit an hour before day-break, in baskets made for the purpose well wadded with cotton and woollen blankets; conveyed home, the basket is placed where neither air nor light can intrude. Zinc bottles, filled with pure water, are placed round the ice in the basket, and the water is thus cooled for the day's supply, an indulgence of great value to the sojourners in the East.

The method of collecting ice is tedious and laborious, but where labour is cheap and the hands plenty the attempt has always been repaid by the advantages. As the sun declines, the labourers commence their work; flat earthen platters are laid out, in exposed situations, in square departments, upon dried sugar-cane leaves very lightly spread, that the frosty air may pass inside the platters. A small quantity of water is poured into the platter; as fast as they freeze their contents are collected and conveyed, during the night, to the pit prepared for the reception of ice. The rising sun disperses the labourers with the ice, and they seek their rest by day, and return again to their employ; as the lion, when the sun disappears, prowls out to seek his food from the bounty of his Creator. The hoar frost seldom commences until the first of January, and lasts throughout that month.

'Roshunie'[51] (Ink).—-Ink, that most useful auxiliary in rendering the thoughts of one mortal serviceable to his fellow-creatures through many ages, is here an article of very simple manufacture. The composition is prepared from lampblack and gum-arabic; how it is made, I have yet to learn.

The ink of the Natives is not durable; with a wet sponge may be erased the labour of a man's life. They have not yet acquired the art of printing,[52] and as they still write with reeds instead of feathers, an ink, permanent as our own, is neither agreeable nor desirable.

There is one beautiful trait in the habits of the Mussulmauns: when about to write they not only make the prayer which precedes every important action of their lives, but they dedicate the writing to God, by a character on the first page, which, as in short-hand writing, implies the whole sentence.[53] A man would be deemed heathenish amongst Mussulmauns, who by neglect or accident omitted this mark on whatever subject he is about to write.

Another of their habits is equally praiseworthy:—out of reverence for God's holy name (always expressed in their letters) written paper to be destroyed is first torn and then

washed in water before the whole is scattered abroad; they would think it a sinful act to burn a piece of paper on which that Holy name has been inscribed. How often have I reflected whilst observing this praiseworthy feature in the character of a comparatively unenlightened people, on the little respect paid to the sacred writings amongst a population who have had greater opportunities of acquiring wisdom and knowledge.[54]

The culpable habit of chandlers in England is fresh in my memory, who without a scruple tear up Bibles and religious works to parcel out their pounds of butter and bacon, without a feeling of remorse on the sacrilege they have committed.

How careless are children in their school-days of the sacred volume which contains the word of God to His creatures. Such improper uses, I might say abuses, of that Holy Book, would draw upon them the censure of a people who have not benefited by the contents, but who nevertheless respect the volume purely because it speaks the word 'of that God whom they worship'.

'Mayndhie' (A shrub).—The mayndhie and its uses have been so fully explained in the letters on Mahurrum, that I shall here merely remark, that the shrub is of quick growth, nearly resembling the small-leafed myrtle; the Natives make hedge-rows of it in their grounds, the blossom is very simple, and the shrub itself hardy: the dye is permanent.

'Sulmah.'[55]—A prepared permanent black dye, from antimony. This is used with hair-pencils to the circle of the eye at the root of the eye-lashes by the Native ladies and often by gentlemen, and is deemed both of service to the sight and an ornament to the person. It certainly gives the appearance of large eyes, if there can be any beauty in altering the natural countenance, which is an absurd idea, in my opinion. Nature is perfect in all her works; and whatever best accords with each feature of a countenance I think she best determines; I am sure that no attempt to disguise or alter Nature in the human face ever yet succeeded, independent of the presumption in venturing to improve that which in His wisdom, the Creator has deemed sufficient.

It would occupy my pages beyond the limits I can conveniently spare to the subject, were I to pursue remarks on the popular cries of a Native city to their fullest extent; scarcely any article that is vended at the bazaars, but is also hawked about the streets. This is a measure of necessity growing out of the state of Mussulmaun society, by which the females are enabled to purchase at their own doors all that can be absolutely requisite for domestic purposes, without the obligation of sending to the markets or the shops, when either not convenient, or not agreeable. And the better to aid both purchasers and venders, these hawkers pronounce their several articles for sale, with voices that cannot fail to impress the inhabitants enclosed within high walls, with a full knowledge of the articles proclaimed without need of interpreters.

[1] *Dukan*.

[2] *Tatti*.

[3] See pp. 57, 173, 174.

[4] The fat of meat is never eaten by the Natives, who view our joints of meat with astonishment, bordering on disgust. [*Author*.]

[5] Many Hindoostaunie dishes require the meat to be finely minced. [*Author*.]

[6] Known as *gargarasaz*.

[7] Baniya.

[8] *Sarraf*.

[9]: Cowries are small shells imported from the Eastern isles, which pass in India as current coin, their value fluctuating with the price of corn, from, sixty to ninety for one pice. [*Author*.]

[10] *Hundi*.

[11] *Dasturi*.

[12] *Sipiwala gila sukha*.

[13] *Jonk*, a leech; *kira*, a worm, *laganewali*.

[14] *Kan saf karnewala*: more usually *Kanmailiya*,
kan, the ear; *maila*, dirt.

[15] *Gota, chandni bikau*, silver lace to sell! The dealer is
Gota, kinari farosh.

[16] *Tel ka acharwala*.

[17] *Mithaiwala*.

[18] *Khilaunewala*.

[19] *Abrak*, talc.

[20] *Pankahwala*.

[21] *Tar*, the palmyra palm.

[22] *Tarkari, mewa*.

[23] *Sag*.

[24] *Chitra*, spotted, speckled.

[25] Quicksilver is used by Native physicians as the first of alternative tonics.

[26] *Machhli*.

[27] Being considered to be like snakes.

[28] *Rohu*, a kind of carp, *Labeo rohita*.

[29] *Chiryawala*.

[30] *Bulbul, Daulias hafizi*, the true Persian nightingale.

[31] *Sabza, sabzak*, green bird, usually a jay, *coracias*.

[32] A shrike, one of the *laniadae*.

[33] *Maina*, a starling, *Aeridotheres tristis*.

[34] The black cuckoo, *Eudynamys orientalis*.

[35] The note of the bird at night, detested by Anglo-Indians, gives it the name of the brain-fever bird.

[36] *Lal, Estrelda amandava*, the avadavat, is so called because it was brought to Europe from Ahmadabad.

[37] *Atishbazi*, fire-play.

[38] Holi, the spring festival of the Hindus, at which bonfires are lighted, coloured water thrown about, and much obscenity is practiced.

[39] See p. 161.

[40] *Chabena, chabeni*, what is munched or chewed (*chabna*).

[41] *Tamashawala: tamashabin*, a spectator of wonders.

[42] *Sampwala*.

[43] 'Mr. Secretary.'

[44] It is generally believed snakes do not live apart from their species; if one is destroyed in a house, a second is anticipated and generally discovered. [*Author*.]

[45] *Dastur, dasturi*, the percentage appropriated on purchase by servants.

[46] *Saiqalgar*, corrupted into *sikligar*, a polisher.

[47] *Dahi khatai*. There is no mystery about the preparation. Milk is boiled and soured by being poured into an earthen vessel in which curds have previously been kept. Sometimes, but less frequently, an acid or rennet is added to precipitate the solid ingredients of the milk.

[48] *Malai*.

[49] *Makkhan*.

[50] *Burfwala*.

[51] *Roshanai*, 'brightness', made of lampblack, gum-arabic, and aloe juice. Elaborate prescriptions are given by Jaffur Shurreef (*Qanoon-e-Islam* 150 f.).

[52] Lithography and printing are now commonly done by natives.

[53] Letters usually begin with, the invocation, *Bi'-smi'illahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim*, 'In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.' The monogram 'I' is often substituted, as being the initial of Allah, and the first letter of the alphabet.

[54] If the Koran were wrapped in a skin and thrown into fire, it would not burn, say the Traditions (Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 521). Compare the care taken by the Chinese to save paper on which writing appears (J.H. Gray, *China*, i. 178).

[55] *Surma*, a black ore of antimony, a tersulphide found in the Panjab, often confused by natives with galena, and most of that sold in bazars is really galena. It is used as a tonic to the nerves of the eye, and to strengthen the sight.

LETTER XVII

Seclusion of Females.—Paadshah Begum.—The Suwaarree.—Female Bearers.—Eunuchs.—Rutts.—Partiality of the Ladies to Large retinues.—Female Companions.—Telling the Khaunie.—Games of the Zeenahnah.—Shampooing.—The Punkah.—Slaves and slavery.—Anecdote.—The Persian Poets.—Fierdowsee.—Saadie, his 'Goolistaun'.—Haafiz.—Mahumud Baarkur.—'Hyaatool Kaaloob'.—Different manner of pronouncing Scripture names…Page 248

The strict seclusion which forms so conspicuous a feature in the female society of the Mussulmauns in India, renders the temporary migration of ladies from their domicile an event of great interest to each individual of the zeenahnah, whether the mistress or her many dependants be considered.

The superior classes seldom quit their habitation but on the most important occasions; they, therefore, make it a matter of necessity to move out in such style as is most likely to proclaim their exalted station in life. I cannot, perhaps, explain this part of my subject better than by giving a brief description of the suwaarree[1] (travelling retinue) of the Paadshah Begum[2] which passed my house at Lucknow on the occasion of her visit to the Durgah of Huzerut Abas Ali Kee, after several years strictly confining herself to the palace.

By Paadshah is meant 'King';—Begum, 'Lady.' The first wife of the King is distinguished by this title from every other he may have married; it is equivalent to that of 'Queen' in other countries. With this title the Paadshah Begum enjoys also many other marks of royal distinction; as, for instance, the dunkah (kettle-drums) preceding her suwaarree; a privilege, I believe, never allowed by the King to any other female of his family. The embroidered chattah (umbrella); the afthaadah (embroidered sun); and chowries of the peacock's feathers, are also out-of-door distinctions allowed only to this lady and the members of the royal family. But to my description:—

First, in the Paadshah Begum's suwaarree I observed a guard of cavalry soldiers in full dress, with their colours unfurled; these were followed by two battalions of infantry, with their bands of music and colours. A company of spearmen on foot, in neat white dresses and turbans, their spears of silver, rich and massive. Thirty-six men in white dresses and turbans, each having a small triangular flag of crimson silk, on which were embroidered the royal arms (two fish and a dirk of a peculiar shape). The staffs of these flags are of silver, about three feet long; in the lower part of the handle a small bayonet is secreted, which can be produced at will by pressure on a secret spring. Next followed a full band of music, drums, fifes, &c.; then the important dunkah, which announces to the public the lady's rank: she is enclosed within the elevated towering chundole, on each side of which the afthaadah and chowries are carried by well-dressed men, generally confidential servants, appointed to this service.

The chundole is a conveyance resembling a palankeen, but much larger and more lofty; it is, in fact, a small silver room, six feet long, five broad, and four feet high, supported by the aid of four silver poles on the shoulders of twenty bearers. These bearers are relieved every quarter of a mile by a second set in attendance: the two sets change alternately to the end of the journey. The bearers are dressed in a handsome royal livery of white calico made to sit close to the person; over which are worn scarlet loose coats of fine English broad-cloth, edged and bordered with gold embroidery: on the back of the coat a fish is embroidered in gold. Their turbans correspond in colour with the coats; on the front of the turban is fixed diagonally a fish of wrought gold, to the tail of which a rich gold tassel is attached; this readies to the shoulder of the bearer, and gives a remarkable air of grandeur to the person.

The chundole is surrounded by very powerful women bearers, whose business it is to convey the vehicle within the compound (court-yard) of the private apartments, or wherever men are not admitted at the same time with females. Chobdhaars and soota-badhaars walk near the chundole carrying gold and silver staffs or wands, and vociferating the rank and honours of the lady they attend with loud voices the whole way to and from the Durgah. These men likewise keep off the crowds of beggars attracted on such occasions by the known liberality of the ladies, who, according to established custom, make distributions to a large amount, which are scattered amongst the populace by several of the Queen's eunuchs, who walk near the chundole for that purpose.

The chief of the eunuchs followed the Queen's chundole on an elephant, seated in a gold howdah; the trappings of which were of velvet, richly embroidered in gold; the eunuch very elegantly dressed in a suit of gold-cloth, a brilliant turban, and attired in expensive shawls. After the eunuch, follow the Paadshah Begum's ladies of quality, in covered palankeens, each taking precedence according to the station or the favour she may enjoy; they are well guarded by soldiers, spearmen, and chobdhaars. Next in the train, follow the several officers of the Queen's household, on elephants, richly caparisoned. And, lastly, the women of inferior rank and female slaves, in rutts (covered carriages) such as are in general use throughout India. These rutts are drawn by bullocks, having bells of a small size strung round their neck, which as they move have a novel and not unpleasing sound, from the variety of tones produced. The rutt is a broad-wheeled carriage, the body and roof forming two cones, one smaller than the other, covered with scarlet cloth, edged, fringed, and bordered with gold or amber silk trimmings. The persons riding in rutts are seated on cushions placed flat on the surface of the carriage (the Asiatic style of sitting at all times) and not on raised seats, the usual custom in Europe. The entrance to these rutts is from the front, like the tilted carts of England, where a thick curtain of corresponding colour and material conceals the inmates from the public gaze; a small space is left between this curtain and the driver, where one or two women servants are seated as guards, who are privileged by age and ugliness to indulge in the liberty of seeing the passing gaiety, and of enjoying, without a screen, the pure air; benefits which their superiors in rank are excluded from at all ages.

In the Paadshah Begum's suwaarree, I counted fifty of these Native carriages, into each of which from four to six females are usually crowded, comprising the members of the household establishment of the great lady; such as companions, readers of the Khoraum, kaawauses[3] (the higher classes of female-slaves), muggalanie[4] (needle-women), &c. This will give you a tolerable idea of the number and variety of females attached to the suite of a lady of consequence in India. The procession, at a walking pace, occupied nearly half an hour in passing the road opposite to my house: it was well conducted, and the effect imposing, both from its novelty and splendour.

A lady here would be the most unhappy creature existing, unless surrounded by a multitude of attendants suitable to her rank in life. They have often expressed surprise and astonishment at my want of taste in keeping only two women servants in my employ, and having neither a companion nor a slave in my whole establishment; they cannot

imagine anything so stupid as my preference to a quiet study, rather than the constant bustle of a well-filled zeenahnah.

Many of the Mussulmaun ladies entertain women companions, whose chief business is to tell stories and fables to their employer, while she is composing herself to sleep; many of their tales partake of the romantic cast which characterizes the well-remembered 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments', one story begetting another to the end of the collection. When the lady is fairly asleep the story is stayed, and the companion resumes her employment when the next nap is sought by her mistress.

Amongst the higher classes the males also indulge in the same practice of being talked to sleep by their men slaves; and it is a certain introduction with either sex to the favour of their employer, when one of these dependants has acquired the happy art of 'telling the khaunie'[5] (fable) with an agreeable voice and manner. The more they embellish a tale by flights of their versatile imaginations, so much greater the merit of the rehearser in the opinion of the listeners.

The inmates of zeenahnahs occasionally indulge in games of chance: their dice are called chowsah (four sides), or chuhsah[6] (six sides); these dice are about four inches long and half an inch thick on every side, numbered much in the same way as the European dice. They are thrown by the hand, not from boxes, and fall lengthways.

They have many different games which I never learned, disliking such modes of trifling away valuable time; I am not, therefore, prepared to describe them accurately. One of their games has a resemblance to draughts, and is played on a chequered cloth carpet, with red and white ivory cones.[7] They have also circular cards, six suits to a pack, very neatly painted, with which they play many (to me) indescribable games; but oftener, to their credit be it said, for amusement than for gain. The gentlemen, however, are not always equally disinterested; they frequently play for large sums of money. I do not, however, find the habit so general with the Natives as it is with Europeans. The religious community deem all games of chance unholy, and therefore incompatible with their mode of living. I am not aware that gaming is prohibited by their law in a direct way,[8] but all practices tending to covetousness are strictly forbidden; and, surely, those who can touch the money called 'winnings' at any game, must be more or less exposed to the accusation of desiring other men's goods.

Shampooing has been so often described as to leave little by way of novelty for me to remark on the subject; it is a general indulgence with all classes in India, whatever may be their age or circumstances. The comfort derived from the pressure of the hands on the limbs, by a clever shampooer, is alone to be estimated by those who have experienced the benefits derived from this luxurious habit, in a climate where such indulgences are needed to assist in creating a free circulation of the blood, which is very seldom induced by exercise as in more Northern latitudes. Persons of rank are shampooed by their slaves during the hours of sleep, whether it be by day or by night; if through any accidental circumstance the pressure is discontinued, even for a few seconds only, the sleep is immediately broken: such is the power of habit.

The punkah (fan) is in constant use by day and night, during eight months of the year. In the houses of the Natives, the slaves have ample employment in administering to the several indulgences which their ladies require at their hands; for with them fixed punkahs have not been introduced into the zeenahnah:[9] the only punkah in their apartments is moved by the hand, immediately over or in front of the person for whose use it is designed. In the gentlemen's apartments, however, and in the houses of all Europeans, punkahs are suspended from the ceiling, to which a rope is fastened and passed through an aperture in the wall into the verandah, where a man is seated who keeps it constantly waving, by pulling the rope, so that the largest rooms, and even churches, are filled with wind, to the great comfort of all present.

The female slaves, although constantly required about the lady's person, are nevertheless tenderly treated, and have every proper indulgence afforded them. They discharge in rotation the required duties of their stations, and appear as much the objects of the lady's care as any other people in her establishment. Slavery with them is without severity; and in the existing state of Mussulmaun society, they declare the women slaves to be necessary appendages to their rank and respectability. The liberal proprietors of slaves give them suitable matches in marriage when they have arrived at a proper age, and even foster their children with the greatest care; often granting them a salary, and sometimes their freedom, if required to make them happy. Indeed, generally speaking the slaves in a Mussulmaun's house must be vicious and unworthy, who are not considered members of the family.

It is an indisputable fact that the welfare of their slaves is an object of unceasing interest with their owners, if they are really good Mussulmauns; indeed, it is second only to the regard which they manifest to their own children.

Many persons have been known, in making their will, to decree the liberty of their slaves. They are not, however, always willing to accept the boon. 'To whom shall I go?'—'Where shall I meet a home like my master's house?' are appeals that endear the slave to the survivors of the first proprietor, and prove that their bondage has not been a very painful one. It is an amiable trait of character amongst the Mussulmauns, with whom I have been intimate, and which I can never forget, that the dependence of their slaves is made easy; that they enjoy every comfort compatible with their station; and that their health, morals, clothing, and general happiness, are as much attended to as that of their own relatives. But slavery is a harsh term between man and man, and however mitigated its state, is still degrading to him. I heartily trust there will be a time when this badge of disgrace shall be wiped away from every human being. He that made man, designed him for higher purposes than to be the slave of his fellow-mortal; but I should be unjust to the people of India, if I did not remark, that having the uncontrolled power in their hands, they abstain from the exercise of any such severity as has disgraced the owners of slaves in other places, where even the laws have failed to protect them from cruelty and oppression. Indeed, wherever an instance has occurred of unfeeling conduct towards these helpless beings, the most marked detestation has invariably been evinced towards the authors by the real Mussulmaun.

I have heard of a very beautiful female slave who had been fostered by a Native lady of high rank, from her infancy. In the course of time, this female had arrived to the honour of being made the companion of her young master, still, however, by her Begum's consent, residing with her lady, who was much attached to her. The freedom of intercourse, occasioned by the slave's exaltation, had the effect of lessening the young creature's former respect for her still kind mistress, to whom she evinced some ungrateful returns for the many indulgences she had through life received at her hands. The exact nature of her offences I never heard, but it was deemed requisite, for the sake of example in a house where some hundreds of female slaves were maintained, that the lady should adopt some such method of testifying her displeasure towards this pretty favourite, as would be consistent with her present elevated station. A stout silver chain was therefore made, by the Begum's orders, and with this the slave was linked to her bedstead a certain number of hours every day, in the view of the whole congregated family of slaves. This punishment would be felt as a degradation by the slave; not the confinement to her bedstead, where she would perhaps have seated herself from choice, had she not been in disgrace.

'Once a slave, and always a slave,' says Fierdowsee the great poet of Persia; but this apophthegm was in allusion to the 'mean mind' of the King who treated him scurvily after his immense labour in that noble work, 'The Shah Namah.' I have a sketch of Fierdowsee's life, which my husband translated for me; but I must forbear giving it here, as I have heard the whole work itself is undergoing a translation by an able Oriental scholar, who will doubtless do justice both to 'The Shah Namah' and the character of Fierdowsee, who is in so great estimation with the learned Asiatics.[10]

The Mussulmauns quote their favourite poets with much the same freedom that the more enlightened nations are wont to use with their famed authors. The moral precepts of Saadie[11] are often introduced with good effect, both in writing and speaking, as beacons to the inexperienced.

Haafiz[12] has benefited the Mussulmaun world by bright effusions of genius, which speak to successive generations the wonders of his extraordinary mind. He was a poet of great merit; his style is esteemed superior to the writers of any other age; and, notwithstanding the world is rich with the beauties of his almost inspired mind, yet, strange as it may appear, he never compiled a single volume. Even in the age in which he lived his merit as a poet was in great estimation; but he never thought of either benefit or amusement to the world or to himself beyond the present time. He wrote the thoughts of his inspired moments on pieces of broken pitchers or pans, with charcoal; some of his admirers were sure to follow his footsteps narrowly, and to their vigilance in securing those scraps strewed about, wherever Haafiz had made his sojourn, may to this day be ascribed the benefit derived by the public from his superior writings. Saadie, however, is the standard favourite of all good Mussulmauns; his 'Goolistaun'[13] (Garden of Roses), is placed in the hands of every youth when consigned to the dominion of a master, as being the most worthy book in the Persian language for his study, whether the beauty of his diction or the morality of his subjects be considered.

The 'Hyaatool Kaaloob'[14] (Enlightener of the Heart), is another Persian work, in prose, by Mirza Mahumud Baakur, greatly esteemed by the learned Mussulmauns. This work contains the life and acts of every known prophet from the Creation, including also Mahumud and the twelve Emaums. The learned Maulvee, it appears, first wrote it in the Arabic language, but afterwards translated it into Persian, with the praiseworthy motive of rendering his invaluable work available to those Mussulmauns who were not acquainted with Arabic.

I have some extracts from this voluminous work, translated for me by my husband, which interested me on account of the great similarity to our Scripture history; and if permitted at some future time, I propose offering them to the public in our own language, conceiving they may be as interesting to others as they have been to me.

The Persian and Arabic authors, I have remarked, substitute Y for J in Scripture names; for instance, Jacob and Joseph are pronounced Yaacoob and Yeusuf.[15] They also differ from us in some names commencing with A, as in Abba, which they pronounce Ubba (Father); for Amen, they say Aameen[16] (the meaning strictly coinciding with ours); for Aaron, Aaroon; for Moses, Moosa.[17] I am told by those who are intimate with both languages, that there is a great similarity between the Hebrew and Arabic. The passage in our Scripture 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaethani,' was interpreted to me by an Arabic scholar, as it is rendered in that well-remembered verse in the English translation.

[1] *Sawari*.

[2] The Padshah Begam was the widow of Ghazi-ud-din Haidar, King of Oudh. On his death, in 1837, she contrived a plot to place his putative son, Munna Jan, on the throne. After a fierce struggle in the palace, the revolt was suppressed by the Resident, Colonel Low, and his assistants, Captains Paton and Shakespear. The pair were confined in the Chunar Fort till their deaths. See the graphic narrative by Gen. Sleeman (*Journey Through Oudh*, ii. 172 ff.); also H.C. Irwin (*The Garden of India*, 127 f.); Mrs. F. Parks (*Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, ii. 114).

[3] *Khawass*, 'distinguished': special attendants.

[4] *Mughlani*, a Moghul woman: an attendant in a zenana, a sempstress.

[5] *Kahani*.

[6] *Chausa, chhahsa*, not to be found in Platt's *Hindustani Dictionary*.

[7] The game of Pachisi, played on a cloth marked in squares: see *Bombay Gazetteer*, ix, part ii, 173.

[8] Gambling is one of the greater sins.—Sale, *Koran: Preliminary Discourse*, 89; Sells, *Faith of Islam*, 155.

[9] Fixed punkahs were introduced early in the nineteenth century.—Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*, 744.

[10] Firdausi, author of the Shahnama, died A.D. 1020 or 1025, aged 89 years. An abridged translation, to which reference is made, by J. Atkinson, was published in 1832. It has since been translated by A.G. and E. Warner (1905), and by A. Rogers (1907).

[11] Shaikh Sa'di, born at Shiraz A.D. 1175, died 1292, aged 120 lunar years. His chief works are the *Gulistan* and the *Bostan*.

[12] Khwaja Hafiz, Shams-ud-din Muhammad, author of the Diwan Hafiz, died at Shiraz A.D. 1389, where his tomb at Musalla is the scene of pilgrimage; see E.G. Browne, *A Year amongst the Persians*, 280 f.

[13] *Gulistan*.

[14] See p. 77.

[15] Ya'qub, Yusuf.

[16] *Amin*.

[17] Harun, Musa.

LETTER XVIII

Evils attending a residence in India.—Frogs.—Flies.—Blains.— Musquitoes.—The White Ant.—The Red Ant.—Their destructive habits.—A Tarantula.—Black Ants.—Locusts.—Superstition of the Natives upon their appearance.—The Tufaun, or Haundhie (tempest).—The rainy season.—Thunder and lightning.—Meteors.—Earthquakes.—A city ruined by them.—Reverence of the Mussulmauns for saints.—Prickly heat.—Cholera Morbus.—Mode of Treatment.—Temperance the best remedy.—Recipe.

A residence in India, productive as it may be (to many) of pecuniary benefits, presents, however, a few inconveniences to Europeans independent of climate,—which, in the absence of more severe trials, frequently become a source of disquiet, until habit has reconciled, or reflection disposed the mind to receive the mixture of evil and good which is the common lot of man in every situation of life. I might moralise on the duty of intelligent beings suffering patiently those trials which human ingenuity cannot avert, even if this world's happiness were the only advantage to be gained; but when we reflect on the account we have to give hereafter, for every thought, word, or action, I am induced

to believe, the well-regulated mind must view with dismay a retrospect of the past murmurings of which it has been guilty. But I must bring into view the trials of patience which our countrymen meet while in India, to those who have neither witnessed nor [Transcriber's note: illegible] them; many of them present slight, but living, op[Transcriber's note: illegible] those evils with which the Egyptians were visited for their impiety to Heaven.

Frogs, for instance, harmless as these creatures are in their nature, occasion no slight inconvenience to the inhabitants of India. They enter their house in great numbers and, without much care, would make their way to the beds, as they do to the chambers; the croaking during the rainy season is almost deafening, particularly towards the evening and during the night. Before the morning has well dawned, these creatures creep into every open doorway, and throughout the day secrete themselves under the edges of mattings and carpets, to the annoyance of those who have an antipathy to these unsightly looking creatures.

The myriads of flies which fill the rooms, and try the patience of every observer of nice order in an English establishment, may bear some likeness to the plague which was inflicted on Pharaoh and his people, as a punishment for their hardness of heart. The flies of India have a property not common to those of Europe, but very similar to the green fly of Spain: when bruised, they will raise a blister on the skin, and, I am told, are frequently made use of by medical gentlemen as a substitute for the Spanish fly.[1]

If but one wing or leg of a fly is by any accident dropped into the food of an individual, and swallowed, the consequence is an immediate irritation of the stomach, answering the purpose of a powerful emetic. At meals the flies are a pest, which most people say they abhor, knowing the consequences of an unlucky admission into the stomach of the smallest particle of the insect. Their numbers exceed all calculation; the table is actually darkened by the myriads, particularly in the season of the periodical rains. The Natives of India use muslin curtains suspended from the ceiling of their hall at meal times, which are made very full and long, so as to enclose the whole dinner party and exclude their tormentors.

The biles or blains, which all classes of people in India are subject to, may be counted as amongst the catalogue of Pharaoh's plagues. The most healthy and the most delicate, whether Europeans or Natives, are equally liable to be visited by these eruptions, which are of a painful and tedious nature. The causes inducing these biles no one, as yet, I believe, has been able to discover, and therefore a preventive has not been found. I have known people who have suffered every year from these attacks, with scarce a day's intermission during the hot weather.[2]

The musquitoes, a species of gnat, tries the patience of the public in no very measured degree; their malignant sting is painful, and their attacks incessant; against which there is no remedy but patience, and a good gauze curtain to the beds. Without some such barrier, foreigners could hardly exist; certainly they never could enjoy a night's repose. Even the mere buzzing of musquitoes is a source of much annoyance to Europeans: I have heard

many declare the bite was not half so distressing as the sound. The Natives, both male and female, habitually wrap themselves up so entirely in their chuddah[3] (sheet) that they escape from these voracious insects, whose sounds are so familiar to them that it may be presumed they lull to, rather than disturb their sleep.

The white ant is a cruel destroyer of goods: where it has once made its domicile, a real misfortune may be considered to have visited the house. They are the most destructive little insects in the world doing as much injury in one hour as a man might labour through a long life to redeem. These ants, it would seem, have no small share of animosity to ladies' finery, for many a wardrobe have they demolished, well filled with valuable dresses and millinery, before their vicinity has even been suspected, or their traces discovered. They destroy beams in the roofs of houses, chests of valuable papers, carpets, mats, and furniture, with a dispatch which renders them the most formidable of enemies, although to appearance but a mean little insect.

There is one season of the year when they take flight, having four beautiful transparent wings; this occurs during the periodical rains, when they are attracted by the lights of the houses, which they enter in countless numbers, filling the tables, and whilst flitting before the lights disencumber themselves of their wings. They then become, to appearance, a fat maggot, and make their way to the floors and walls, where it is supposed they secrete themselves for a season, and are increasing in numbers whilst in this stage of existence. At the period of their migration in search of food, they will devour any perishable materials within their reach. It is probable, however, that they first send out scouts to discover food for the family, for the traces of white ants are discovered by a sort of clay-covered passage, formed as they proceed on their march in almost a direct line, which often extends a great distance from their nest.

To mark the economy of ants has sometimes formed a part of my amusements in Hindoostaun.[4] I find they all have wings at certain seasons of the year; and more industrious little creatures cannot exist than the small red ants, which are so abundant in India. I have watched them at their labours for hours without tiring; they are so small that from eight to twelve in number labour with great difficulty to convey a grain of wheat or barley; yet these are not more than half the size of a grain of English wheat. I have known them to carry one of these grains to their nest at a distance of from six hundred to a thousand yards; they travel in two distinct lines over rough or smooth ground, as it may happen, even up and down steps, at one regular pace. The returning unladen ants invariably salute the burthened ones, who are making their way to the general storehouse; but it is done so promptly that the line is neither broken nor their progress impeded by the salutation.

I was surprised one morning in my breakfast parlour to discover something moving slowly up the wall; on approaching near to examine what it was, I discovered a dead wasp, which the khidmutghar[5] (footman) had destroyed with his chowrie during breakfast, and which, falling on the floor, had become the prize of my little friends (a vast multitude), who were labouring with their tiny strength to convey it to their nest in the ceiling. The weight was either too great, or they had quarrelled over the burthen,—I

know not which,—but the wasp fell to the ground when they had made more than half the journey of the wall; the courageous little creatures, however, were nothing daunted, they resumed their labour, and before evening their prize was safely housed.

These ants are particularly fond of animal food. I once caught a tarantula; it was evening, and I wished to examine it by daylight. I placed it for this purpose in a recess of the wall, under a tumbler, leaving just breathing room. In the morning I went to examine my curiosity, when to my surprise it was dead and swarming with red ants, who had been its destroyers, and were busily engaged in making a feast on the (to them) huge carcass of the tarantula.

These small creatures often prove a great annoyance by their nocturnal visits to the beds of individuals, unless the precaution be taken of having brass vessels, filled with water, to each of the bed-feet; the only method of effectually preventing their approach to the beds. I was once much annoyed by a visit from these bold insects, when reclining on a couch during the extreme heat of the day. I awoke by an uneasy sensation from their bite or sting about my ears and face, and found they had assembled by millions on my head; the bath was my immediate resource. The Natives tell me these little pests will feed on the human body if they are not disturbed: when any one is sick there is always great anxiety to keep them away.

The large black ant is also an enemy to man; its sharp pincers inflict wounds of no trifling consequence; it is much larger than the common fly, has long legs, is swift of foot, and feeds chiefly on animal substances. I fancy all the ant species are more or less carnivorous, but strictly epicurean in their choice of food, avoiding tainted or decomposed substances with the nicest discrimination. Sweetmeats are alluring to them; there is also some difficulty in keeping them from jars of sugar or preserves; and when swallowed in food, are the cause of much personal inconvenience.

I have often witnessed the Hindoos, male and female, depositing small portions of sugar near ants' nests, as acts of charity to commence the day with;[6] and it is the common opinion with the Natives generally, that wherever the red ants colonize prosperity attends the owners of that house. They destroy the white ants, though the difference in their size is as a grain of sand to a barley-corn; and on that account only may be viewed rather as friends than enemies to man, provided by the same Divine source from whence all other benefits proceed.

The locusts, so familiar by name to the readers of Scripture, are here seen to advantage in their occasional visits. I had, however, been some years in India before I was gratified by the sight of these wonderful insects; not because of their rarity, as I had frequently heard of their appearance and ravages, but not immediately in the place where I was residing, until the year 1825, which the following memorandum made at the time will describe.

On the third of July, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, I observed a dusky brown cloud bordering the Eastern horizon, at the distance of about four miles from my house, which stands on an elevated situation; the colour was so unusual that I resolved on

inquiring from my oracle, Meer Hadjee Shaah, to whom I generally applied for elucidations of the remarkable, what such an appearance portended. He informed me it was a flight of locusts.

I had long felt anxious to witness those insects, that had been the food of St. John in the Desert, and which are so familiar by name from their frequent mention in Scripture; and now that I was about to be gratified, I am not ashamed to confess my heart bounded with delight, yet with an occasional feeling of sympathy for the poor people, whose property would probably become the prey of this devouring cloud of insects before the morning's dawn. Long before they had time to advance, I was seated in an open space in the shade of my house to watch them more minutely. The first sound I could distinguish was as the gentlest breeze, increasing as the living cloud approached; and as they moved over my head, the sound was like the rustling of the wind through the foliage of many pepul-trees.[7]

It was with a feeling of gratitude that I mentally thanked God at the time that they were a stingless body of insects, and that I could look on them without the slightest apprehension of injury. Had this wondrous cloud of insects been the promised locust described in the Apocalypse, which shall follow the fifth angel's trumpet; had they been hornets, wasps, or even the little venomous musquito, I had not then dared to retain my position to watch with eager eyes the progress of this insect family as they advanced, spreading for miles on every side with something approaching the sublime, and presenting a most imposing spectacle. So steady and orderly was their pace, having neither confusion nor disorder in their line of march through the air, that I could not help comparing them to the well-trained horses of the English cavalry.[8] 'Who gave them this order in their flight?' was in my heart and on my tongue.

I think the main body of this army of locusts must have occupied thirty minutes in passing over my head, but my attention was too deeply engrossed to afford me time to consult my time-piece. Stragglers there were many, separated from the flight by the noises made by the servants and people to deter them from settling; some were caught, and, no doubt, converted into currie for a Mussulmaun's meal. They say it is no common delicacy, and is ranked among the allowed animal food.

The Natives anticipate earthquakes after the visitation or appearance of locusts. They are said to generate in mountains, but I cannot find any one here able to give me an authentic account of their natural history.

On the 18th of September, 1825, another flight of these wonderful insects passed over my house in exactly a contrary direction from those which appeared in July, viz. from the West towards the East. The idea struck me that they might be the same swarm, returning after fulfilling the object of their visit to the West: but I have no authority on which to ground my supposition. The Natives have never made natural history even an amusement, much less a study, although their habits are purely those of Nature; they know the property of most herbs, roots, and flowers, which they cultivate, not for their beauty, but for the benefit they render to man and beast.[9]

I could not learn that the flight had rested anywhere near Futtyghur, at which place I was then living. They are of all creatures the most destructive to vegetation, licking with their rough tongue the blades of grass, the leaves of trees, and green herbage of all kinds. Wherever they settle for the night, vegetation is completely destroyed; and a day of mournful consequences is sure to follow their appearance in the poor farmer's fields of green com.

But that which bears the most awful resemblance to the visitations of God's wrath on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, is, I think, the frightful storm of wind which brings thick darkness over the earth at noonday, and which often occurs from the Tufaun or Haundhie,[10] as it is called by the Natives. Its approach is first discerned by dark columns of yellow clouds, bordering the horizon; the alarm is instantly given by the Natives, who hasten to put out the fires in the kitchens, and close the doors and windows in European houses, or with the Natives to let down the purdahs. No sound that can be conceived by persons who have not witnessed this phenomenon of Nature, is capable of conveying an idea of the tempest. In a few minutes total darkness is produced by the thick cloud of dust; and the tremendous rushing wind carries the fine sand, which produces the darkness, through every cranny and crevice to all parts of the house; so that in the best secured rooms every article of furniture is covered with sand, and the room filled as with a dense fog: the person, dresses, furniture, and the food (if at meal times), are all of one dusky colour; and though candles are lighted to lessen the horror of the darkness, they only tend to make the scene of confusion more visible.

Fortunately the tempest is not of very long continuance. I have never known it to last more than half an hour; yet in that time how much might have been destroyed of life and property, but for the interposing care of Divine mercy, whose gracious Providence over the works of His hand is seen in such seasons as these! The sound of thunder is hailed as a messenger of peace; the Natives are then aware that the fury of the tempest is spent, as a few drops of rain indicate a speedy termination; and when it has subsided they run to see what damage has been done to the premises without. It often occurs, that trees are torn up by their roots, the thatched houses and huts unroofed, and, if due care has not been taken to quench the fires in time, huts and bungalows are frequently found burnt, by the sparks conveyed in the dense clouds of sand which pass with the rapidity of lightning.

These tufauns occur generally in April, May, and June, before the commencement of the periodical rains. I shall never forget the awe I felt upon witnessing the first after my arrival, nor the gratitude which filled my heart when the light reappeared. The Natives on such occasions gave me a bright example: they ceased not in the hour of peril to call on God for safety and protection; and when refreshed by the return of calm, they forgot not that their helper was the merciful Being in whom they had trusted, and to whom they gave praise and thanksgiving.

The rainy season is at first hailed with a delight not easily to be explained. The long continuance of the hot winds,—during which period (three months or more) the sky is of the colour of copper, without the shadow of a cloud to shield the earth from the fiery heat of the sun, which has, in that time, scorched the earth and its inhabitants, stunted

vegetation, and even affected the very houses—renders the season when the clouds pour out their welcome moisture a period which is looked forward to with anxiety, and received with universal joy.

The smell of the earth after the first shower is more dearly loved than the finest aromatics or the purest otta. Vegetation revives and human nature exults in the favourable shower. As long as the novelty lasts, and the benefit is sensibly felt, all seem to rejoice; but when the intervals of clouds without rain occur, and send forth, as they separate, the bright glare untempered by a passing breeze, poor weak human nature is too apt to revolt against the season they cannot control, and sometimes a murmuring voice is heard to cry out, 'Oh, when will the rainy season end!'

The thunder and lightning during the rainy season are beyond my ability to describe. The loud peals of thunder roll for several minutes in succession, magnificently, awfully grand. The lightning is proportionably vivid, yet with fewer instances of conveying the electric fluid to houses than might be expected when the combustible nature of the roofs is considered; the chief of which are thatched with coarse dry grass. The casualties are by no means frequent; and although trees surround most of the dwellings, yet we seldom hear of any injury by lightning befalling them or their habitations. Fiery meteors frequently fall; one within my recollection was a superb phenomenon, and was visible for several seconds.

The shocks from earthquakes are frequently felt in the Upper Provinces of India;[11] I was sensible of the motion on one occasion (rather a severe one), for at least twenty seconds. The effect on me, however, was attended with no inconvenience beyond a sensation of giddiness, as if on board ship in a calm, when the vessel rolls from side to side.

At Kannoge, now little more than a village in population, between Cawnpore and Futtyghur, I have rambled amongst the ruins of what formerly was an immense city, but which was overturned by an earthquake some centuries past. At the present period numerous relics of antiquity, as coins, jewels, &c., are occasionally discovered, particularly after the rains, when the torrents break down fragments of the ruins, and carry with the streams of water the long-buried mementos of the riches of former generations to the profit of the researching villagers, and to the gratification of curious travellers, who generally prove willing purchasers.[12]

I propose giving in another letter the remarks I was led to make on Kannoge during my pleasant sojourn in that retired situation, as it possesses many singular antiquities and contains the ashes of many holy Mussulmaun saints. The Mussulmauns, I may here observe, reverence the memory of the good and the pious of all persuasions, but more particularly those of their own faith. I have sketches of the lives and actions of many of their sainted characters, received through the medium of my husband and his most amiable father, that are both amusing and instructive; and notwithstanding their particular faith be not in accordance with our own, it is only an act of justice to admit, that they were men who lived in the fear of God, and obeyed his commandments according to the

instruction they had received; and which, I hope, may prove agreeable to my readers when they come to those pages I have set apart for such articles.

My catalogue of the trying circumstances attached to the comforts which are to be met with in India are nearly brought to a close; but I must not omit mentioning one 'blessing in disguise' which occurs annually, and which affects Natives and Europeans indiscriminately, during the hot winds and the rainy season: the name of this common visitor is, by Europeans, called 'the prickly heat'; by Natives it is denominated 'Gurhum dahnie'[13] (warm rash). It is a painful irritating rash, often spreading over the whole body, mostly prevailing, however, wherever the clothes screen the body from the power of the air; we rarely find it on the hands or face. I suppose it to be induced by excessive perspiration, more particularly as those persons who are deficient in this freedom of the pores, so essential to healthiness, are not liable to be distressed by the rash; but then they suffer more severely in their constitution by many other painful attacks of fever, &c. So greatly is this rash esteemed the harbinger of good health, that they say in India, 'the person so afflicted has received his life-lease for the year'; and wherever it does not make its appearance, a sort of apprehension is entertained of some latent illness.

Children suffer exceedingly from the irritation, which to scratch is dangerous. In Native nurseries I have seen applications used of pounded sandal-wood, camphor, and rose-water; with the peasantry a cooling earth, called mooltanie mittee,[14] similar to our fuller's-earth, is moistened with water and plastered over the back and stomach, or wherever the rash mostly prevails; all this is but a temporary relief, for as soon as it is dry, the irritation and burning are as bad as ever.

The best remedy I have met with, beyond patient endurance of the evil, is bathing in rain-water, which soothes the violent sensations, and eventually cools the body. Those people who indulge most in the good things of this life are the greatest sufferers by this annual attack. The benefits attending temperance are sure to bring an ample reward to the possessors of that virtue under all circumstances, but in India more particularly; I have invariably observed the most abstemious people are the least subject to attacks from the prevailing complaints of the country, whether fever or cholera, and when attacked the most likely subjects to recover from those alarming disorders.

At this moment of anxious solicitude throughout Europe, when that awful malady, the cholera, is spreading from city to city with rapid strides, the observations I have been enabled to make by personal acquaintance with afflicted subjects in India, may be acceptable to my readers; although I heartily pray our Heavenly Father may in His goodness and mercy preserve our country from that awful calamity, which has been so generally fatal in other parts of the world.

The Natives of India designate cholera by the word 'Hyza', which with them signifies 'the plague'. By this term, however, they do not mean that direful disorder so well known to us by the same appellation; as, if I except the Mussulmaun pilgrims, who have seen, felt, and described its ravages on their journey to Mecca, that complaint seems to be unknown to the present race of Native inhabitants of Hindoostaun. The word 'hyza', or 'plague',

would be applied by them to all complaints of an epidemic or contagious nature by which the population were suddenly attacked, and death ensued. When the cholera first appeared in India (which I believe was in 1817), it was considered by the Natives a new complaint.[15]

In all cases of irritation of the stomach, disordered bowels, or severe feverish symptoms, the Mussulmaun doctors strongly urge the adoption of 'starving out the complaint'. This has become a law of Nature with all the sensible part of the community; and when the cholera first made its appearance in the Upper Provinces of Hindoostaun, those Natives who observed their prescribed temperance were, when attacked, most generally preserved from the fatal consequences of the disorder.

On the very first symptom of cholera occurring in a member of a Mussulmaun family, a small portion of zahur morah[16] (derived from zahur, poison; morah, to kill or destroy, and thence understood as an antidote to poison, some specimens of which I have brought with me to England) moistened with rosewater, is promptly administered, and, if necessary, repeated at short intervals; due care being taken to prevent the patient from receiving anything into the stomach, excepting rosewater, the older the more efficacious in its property to remove the malady. Wherever zahur morah was not available, secun-gebeen[17] (syrup of vinegar) was administered with much the same effect. The person once attacked, although the symptoms should have subsided by this application, is rigidly deprived of nourishment for two or three days, and even longer if deemed expedient; occasionally allowing only a small quantity of rose-water, which they say effectually removes from the stomach and bowels those corrupt adhesions which, in their opinion, is the primary cause of the complaint.

The cholera, I observed, seldom attacked abstemious people; when, however, this was the case, it generally followed a full meal; whether of rice or bread made but little difference, much I believe depending on the general habit of the subject; as among the peasantry and their superiors the complaint raged with equal malignity, wherever a second meal was resorted to whilst the person had reason to believe the former one had not been well digested. An instance of this occurred under my own immediate observation in a woman, the wife of an old and favourite servant. She had imprudently eaten a second dinner, before her stomach, by her own account, had digested the preceding meal. She was not a strong woman, but in tolerable good health; and but a few hours previous to the attack I saw her in excellent spirits, without the most remote appearance of indisposition. The usual applications failed of success, and she died in a few hours. This poor woman never could be persuaded to abstain from food at the stated period of meals; and the Natives were disposed to conclude that this had been the actual cause of her sufferings and dissolution.

In 1821 the cholera raged with even greater violence than on its first appearance in Hindoostaun; by that time many remedies had been suggested, through the medium of the press, by the philanthropy and skill of European medical practitioners, the chief of whom recommended calomel in large doses, from twenty to thirty grains, and opium proportioned to the age and strength of the patient. I never found the Natives, however,

willing to accept this as a remedy, but I have heard that amongst Europeans it was practised with success. From a paragraph which I read in the Bengal papers, I prepared a mixture that I have reason to think, through the goodness of Divine Providence, was beneficial to many poor people who applied for it in the early stages of the complaint, and who followed the rule laid down of complete abstinence, until they were out of danger from a relapse, and even then for a long time to be cautious in the quantity and digestible quality of their daily meal. The mixture was as follows:

Brandy, one pint; oil or spirit of peppermint, if the former half an ounce—if the latter, one ounce; ground black pepper, two ounces; yellow rind of oranges grated, without any of the white, one ounce; these were kept closely stopped and occasionally shook, a table-spoonful administered for each dose, the patient well covered up from the air, and warmth created by blankets or any other means within their power, repeating the close as the case required.

Of the many individuals who were attacked with this severe malady in our house very few died, and those, it was believed, were victims to an imprudent determination to partake of food before they were convalescent,—individuals who never could be prevailed on to practise abstemious habits, which we had good reason for believing was the best preventive against the complaint during those sickly seasons. The general opinion entertained both by Natives and Europeans, at those awful periods, was, that the cholera was conveyed in the air; very few imagined that it was infectious, as it frequently attacked some members of a family and the rest escaped, although in close attendance—even such as failed not to pay the last duties to the deceased according to Mussulmaun custom, which exposed them more immediately to danger if infection existed;—yet no fears were ever entertained, nor did I ever hear an opinion expressed amongst them, that it had been or could be conveyed from one person to another.

Native children generally escaped the attack, and I never heard of an infant being in the slightest degree visited by this malady. It is, however, expedient, to use such precautionary measures as sound sense and reason may suggest, since wherever the cholera has appeared, it has proved a national calamity, and not a partial scourge to a few individuals; all are alike in danger of its consequences, whether the disorder be considered infectious or not, and therefore the precautions I have urged in India, amongst the Native communities, I recommend with all humility here, that cleanliness and abstemious diet be observed among all classes of people.

In accordance with the prescribed antidote to infection from scarlet fever in England, I gave camphor (to be worn about the person) to the poor in my vicinity, and to all the Natives over whom I had either influence or control; I caused the rooms to be frequently fumigated with vinegar or tobacco, and labaun[18] (frankincense) burnt occasionally. I would not, however, be so presumptuous to insinuate even that these were preventives to cholera, yet in such cases of universal terror as the one in question, there can be no impropriety in recommending measures which cannot injure, and may benefit, if only by giving a purer atmosphere to the room inhabited by individuals either in sickness or in health. But above all things, aware that human aid or skill can never effect a remedy

unaided by the mercy and power of Divine Providence, let our trust be properly placed in His goodness, 'who giveth medicine to heal our sickness', and humbly intreat that He may be pleased to avert the awful calamity from our shores which threatens and disturbs Europe generally at this moment.

Were we to consult Nature rather than inordinate gratifications, we should find in following her dictates the best security to health at all times, but more particularly in seasons of prevailing sickness. Upon the first indications of cholera, I have observed the stomach becomes irritable, the bowels are attacked by griping pains, and unnatural evacuations; then follow sensations of faintness, weakness, excessive thirst, the pulse becomes languid, the surface of the body cold and clammy, whilst the patient feels inward burning heat, with spasms in the legs and arms.

In the practice of Native doctors, I have noticed that they administer saffron to alleviate violent sickness with the best possible effect. A case came under my immediate observation, of a young female who had suffered from a severe illness similar in every way to the cholera; it was not, however, suspected to be that complaint, because it was not then prevailing at Lucknow: after some days the symptoms subsided, excepting the irritation of her stomach, which, by her father's account, obstinately rejected everything offered for eleven days. When I saw her, she was apparently sinking under exhaustion; I immediately tendered the remedy recommended by my husband, viz. twelve grains of saffron, moistened with a little rose-water; and found with real joy that it proved efficacious; half the quantity in doses were twice repeated that night, and in the morning the patient was enabled to take a little gruel, and in a reasonable time entirely recovered her usual health and strength.

I have heard of people being frightened into an attack of cholera by apprehending the evil: this, however, can only occur with very weak minds, and such as have neglected in prosperity to prepare their hearts for adversity. When I first reached India, the fear of snakes, which I expected to find in every path, embittered my existence. This weakness was effectually corrected by the wise admonitions of Meer Hadjee Shaah, 'If you trust in God, he will preserve you from every evil; be assured the snake has no power to wound without permission.'

[1] The *Cantharis resicatoria* is imported into India for use in blisters. But there is a local substitute, *mylabris*, of which there are several varieties (Watt, *Economic Dictionary*, ii. 128, v. 309).

[2] The reference is perhaps to what is known as the Dehli Boil, a form of oriental sore, like the Biskra Button, Aleppo Evil, Lahore and Multan Sore (Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*, 302); possibly only to hot-weather boils.

[3] *Chadar*.

[4] For a good account of the ways of Indian ants, see M. Thornton, *Haunts and Hobbies of an Indian Official*, 2 ff.

[5] *Khidmatgar*.

[6] The habit of laying sugar near ants' nests is a piece of fertility magic, and common to Jains and Vishnu-worshippers; see J. Fryor, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, Hakluyt Society ed., I, 278.

[7] *Pipal, Ficus religiosa*.

[8] An esteemed friend has since referred me to the second chapter of the prophet Joel, part of the seventh and eighth verses, as a better comparison. [*Author*.]

[9] The variety of locust seen in India is *acridium peregrinum*, which is said to range throughout the arid region from Algeria to N.W. India. They have extended as far south as the Kistna District of Madras (Watt, *Economic Dictionary*, VI, part i, 154).

[10] *Tufan*, storm, *andhi*, darkness.

[11] Earthquakes tend generally to be more frequent in the regions of extra-peninsular India, where the rocks have been more recently folded, than in the more stable Peninsula. Serious earthquakes have occurred recently in Assam, June, 1897, and in Kangra, Panjab, April, 1907. (*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1907, i. 98 f.)

[12] Kanauj, in the Farrukhabad District, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. The ruin of the great city was due to attacks by Mahmud of Ghazni, A.D. 1019, and by Shihab-ud-din, Muhammad Ghori, in 1194.

[13] *Garm dahani*, hot inflammation, prickly heat.

[14] *Multani mitti*, 'Multan Earth', a soft, drab-coloured saponaceous earth, like fuller's earth, used in medicine and for cleansing the hair.

[15] Cholera (*haiza*) was known to the Hindus long before the arrival of the Portuguese, who first described it (Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*[2], 586 ff.). The attention of English physicians was first seriously called to it in 1817, when it broke out in the Jessore District of Bengal, and in the camp of Marquess Hastings in the Datiya State, Central India. (See Sleeman, *Rambles*, 163, 232.)

[16] *Zahr-mohra*, 'poison vanguard': the bezoar stone, believed to be an antidote to poison (Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*[2], 90 f.).

[17] *Sikanjabin*, oxymel, vinegar, lime-juice, or other acid, mixed with sugar or honey.

[18] *Loban*.

LETTER XIX

Kannoge.—Formerly the capital of Hindoostaun.—Ancient castle.—Durability of the bricks made by the aborigines.—Prospect from the Killaah (castle).—Ruins.—Treasures found therein.—The Durgah Baallee Peer Kee.—Mukhburrahs.—Ancient Mosque.—Singular structure of some stone pillars.—The Durgah Mukdoom Jhaunneer.—Conversions to the Mussulmaun Faith.—Anecdote.—Ignorance of the Hindoos.—Sculpture of the Ancients.—Mosque inhabited by thieves.—Discovery of Nitre.—Method of extracting it.—Conjectures of its produce.—Residence in the castle.—Reflections.

Kannoge, now comparatively a Native village, situated about midway between Cawnpore and Futtyghur, is said to have been the capital of Hindoostaun, and according to Hindoo tradition was the seat of the reigning Rajahs two thousand years prior to the invasion of India by the Sultaun Timoor. If credit be given to current report, the Hindoos deny that the Deluge extended to India[1] as confidently as the Chinese declare that it never reached China.

These accounts I merely state as the belief of the Hindoos, and those the least educated persons of the population. The Mussulmauns, however, are of a different opinion; the account they give of the Deluge resembles the Jewish, and doubtless the information Mahumud has conveyed to his followers was derived from that source.

Some of the people are weak enough to conjecture that Kannoge was founded by Cain.[2] It bears, however, striking features of great antiquity, and possesses many sufficient evidences of its former extent and splendour to warrant the belief that it has been the capital of no mean kingdom in ages past. The remarks I was enabled to make during a residence of two years at Kannoge may not be deemed altogether uninteresting to my readers, although my descriptions may be 'clouded with imperfections'. I will not, therefore, offer any useless apologies for introducing them in my present Letter.

Kannoge, known as the oldest capital of the far-famed kingdom of Hindoostaun, is now a heap upon heap of ruins, proclaiming to the present generation, even in her humility, how vast in extent and magnificent in style she once was, when inhabited by the rulers of that great empire. The earth entombs emblems of greatness, of riches, and of man's vain-glorious possessions; buildings have been reared by successive generations on mounds which embowelled the ruined mansions of predecessors.

The killaah[3] (castle) in which during two years we shared an abode with sundry crows, bats, scorpions, centipedes, and other living things, was rebuilt about seven hundred years ago, on the original foundation which, as tradition states, has continued for more than two thousand years. The materials of which the walls are constructed are chiefly bricks.

It is worthy of remark, that the bricks of ancient manufacture in India give evidence of remarkable durability, and are very similar in quality to the Roman bricks occasionally

discovered in England. At Delhi I have met with bricks that have been undoubtedly standing six or seven centuries; and at Kannoge, if tradition speak true, the same articles which were manufactured upwards of two thousand years ago, and which retain the colour of the brightest red, resemble more the hardest stone than the things we call bricks of the present day. After the minutest examination of these relics of ancient labour, I am disposed to think that the clay must have been more closely kneaded, and the bricks longer exposed to the action of fire than they are by the present mode of manufacturing them; and such is their durability, that they are only broken with the greatest difficulty.

The killaah was originally a fortified castle, and is situated near the river Kaullee Nuddie,[4] a branch or arm of the Ganges, the main stream of which flows about two miles distant. During the periodical rains, the Ganges overflows its banks, and inundates the whole tract of land intervening between the two rivers, forming an extent of water more resembling a sea than a river.

At the time we occupied the old castle, scarcely one room could be called habitable; and I learned with regret after the rains of 1826 and 1827, which were unusually heavy, that the apartments occupied since the Honourable East India Company's rule by their taasseel-dhaars,[5] (sub-collectors of the revenue), were rendered entirely useless as a residence.

The comfortless interior of that well-remembered place was more than compensated by the situation. Many of my English acquaintance, who honoured me by visits at Kannoge, will, I think, agree with me, that the prospect from the killaah was indescribably grand. The Ganges and the Kaullee Nuddee were presented at one view; and at certain seasons of the year, as far as the eye could reach, their banks, and well-cultivated fields, clothed in a variety of green, seemed to recall the mind to the rivers of England, and their precious borders of grateful herbage. Turning in another direction, the eye was met by an impenetrable boundary of forest trees, magnificent in growth, and rich in foliage; at another glance, ruins of antiquity, or the still remaining tributes to saints; the detached villages; the sugar plantations; the agriculturists at their labour; the happy peasantry laden with their purchases from the bazaars; the Hindoo women and children, bearing their earthen-vessels to and from the river for supplies of water:—each in their turn formed objects of attraction from without, that more than repaid the absence of ordinary comforts in the apartment from which they were viewed. The quiet calm of this habitation, unbroken by the tumultuous sounds of a city, was so congenial to my taste, that when obliged to quit it, I felt almost as much regret as when I heard that the rains had destroyed the place which had been to me a home of peaceful enjoyment.

The city of Kannoge has evidently suffered the severities of a shock from an earthquake: the present inhabitants cannot tell at what period this occurred, but it must have been some centuries since, for the earth is grown over immense ruins, in an extensive circuit, forming a strong but coarse carpet of grass on the uneven mounds containing the long-buried mansions of the great. The rapid streams from the periodical rains forcing passages between the ruins, has in many places formed deep and frightful ravines, as well as rugged roads and pathways for the cattle and the traveller.

After each heavy fall of rain, the peasantry and children are observed minutely searching among the ruins for valuables washed out with the loose earth and bricks by the force of the streams, and, I am told, with successful returns for their toil; jewels, gold and silver ornaments, coins of gold and silver, all of great antiquity, are thus secured; these are bought by certain merchants of the city, by whom they are retailed to English travellers, who generally when on a river voyage to or from the Upper Provinces, contrive, if possible, to visit Kannoge to inspect the ruins, and purchase curiosities.

There is a stately range of buildings at no great distance from the killaah (castle), in a tolerable state of preservation, called 'Baallee Peer Kee Durgah'.[6] The entrance is by a stone gateway of very superior but ancient workmanship, and the gates of massy wood studded with iron. I observed that on the wood framework over the entrance, many a stray horseshoe has been nailed, which served to remind me of Wales, where it is so commonly seen on the doors of the peasantry.[7] I am not aware but that the same motives may have influenced the two people in common.

To the right of the entrance stands a large mosque, which, I am told, was built by Baallee himself; who, it is related, was a remarkably pious man of the Mussulmaun persuasion, and had acquired so great celebrity amongst his countrymen as a perfect durweish, as to be surnamed peer[8] (saint). The exact time when he flourished at Kannoge, I am unable to say; but judging from the style of architecture, and other concurring circumstances, it must have been built at different periods, some parts being evidently of very ancient structure.

There are two mukhburrahs,[9] within the range, which viewed from the main road, stand in a prominent situation: one of these mukhburrahs was built by command, or in the reign (I could not learn which), of Shah Allumgeer [10] over the remains of Ballee Peer; and the second contains some of the peer's immediate relatives.

From the expensive manner in which these buildings are constructed, some idea may be formed of the estimation this pious man was held in by his countrymen. The mausoleums are of stone, and elevated on a base of the same material, with broad flights of steps to ascend by. The stone must have been brought hither from a great distance, as I do not find there is a single quarry nearer than Delhi or Agra. There are people in charge of this Durgah who voluntarily exile themselves from the society of the world, in order to lead lives of strict devotion and under the imagined presiding influence of the saint's pure spirit; they keep the sanctuary from pollution, burn lamps nightly on the tomb, and subsist by the occasional contributions of the charitable visitors and their neighbours.

Within the boundary of the Durgah, I remarked a very neat stone tomb, in good preservation: this, I was told, was the burying-place of the Kalipha [11] (head servant) who had attended on and survived Baallee Peer; this man had saved money in the service of the saint, which he left to be devoted to the repairs of the Durgah; premising that his tomb should be erected near that of his sainted master, and lamps burned every night over the graves, which is faithfully performed by the people in charge of the Durgah.

After visiting the ruins of Hindoo temples, which skirt the borders of the river in many parts of the district of Kannoge, the eye turns with satisfaction to the ancient mosques of the Mussulmauns, which convey conviction to the mind, that even in the remote ages of Hindoostaun, there have been men who worshipped God; whilst the piles of mutilated stone idols also declare the zealous Mussulmaun to have been jealous for his Creator's glory. I have noticed about Kannoge hundreds of these broken or defaced images collected together in heaps (generally under trees), which were formerly the objects to which the superstitious Hindoos bowed in worship, until the more intelligent Mussulmauns strayed into the recesses of the deepest darkness to show the idolaters that God could not be represented by a block of stone.

In a retired part of Kannoge, I was induced to visit the remains of an immense building[12], expecting the gratification of a fine prospect from its towering elevation; my surprise, however, on entering the portal drove from my thoughts the first object of my visit.

The whole building is on a large scale, and is, together with the gateway, steps, roof, pillars, and offices, composed entirely of stone: from what I had previously conceived of the ancient Jewish temples, this erection struck me as bearing a strong resemblance. It appears that there is not the slightest portion of either wood or metal used in the whole construction; and, except where some sort of cement was indispensable, not a trace of mortar is to be discovered in the whole fabric. The pillars of the colonnade, which form three sides of the square, are singular piles of stone, erected with great exactness in the following order:—

A broad block of stone forms the base; on the centre is raised a pillar of six feet by two square, on this rests a circular stone, resembling a grindstone, on which is placed another upright pillar, and again a circular, until five of each are made to rest on the base to form a pillar; the top circulars or caps are much larger than the rest; and on these the massy stone beams for the roof are supported. How these ponderous stones forming the whole roof were raised, unacquainted as these people ever have been with machinery, is indeed a mystery sufficient to impress on the weak-minded a current report amongst the Natives, that the whole building was erected in one night by supernatural agency, from materials which had formerly been used in the construction of a Hindoo temple, but destroyed by the zeal of the Mussulmauns soon after their invasion of Hindoostaun.

The pillars I examined narrowly, and could not find any traces of cement or fastening; yet, excepting two or three which exhibit a slight curve, the whole colonnade is in a perfect state. The hall, including the colonnade, measures one hundred and eighty feel by thirty, and has doubtless been, at some time or other, a place of worship, in all probability for the Mussulmauns, there being still within the edifice a sort of pulpit of stone evidently intended for the reader, both from its situation and construction; this has sustained many rude efforts from the chisel in the way of ornament not strictly in accordance with the temple itself; besides which, there are certain tablets engraved in the Persian and Arabic character, which contain verses or chapters from the Khoraun; so that it may be

concluded, whatever was the original design of the building, it has in later periods served the purposes of a mosque.

In some parts of this building traces exist to prove that the materials of which it has been formed originally belonged to the Hindoos, for upon many of the stones there are carved figures according with their mythology; such stones, however, have been placed generally upside down, and attempts to deface the graven figures are conspicuous,—they are all turned inside, whilst the exterior appearance is rough and uneven. It may be presumed they were formerly outward ornaments to a temple of some sort, most likely a 'Bootkhanah'[13] (the house for idols).

I have visited the Durgah, called Mukhdoom Jhaaunneer[14], situated in the heart of the present city, which is said to have been erected nearly a thousand years ago, by the order of a Mussulmaun King; whether of Hindoostaun or not, I could not learn. It bears in its present dilapidated state, evidences both of good taste and superior skill in architecture, as well as of costliness in the erection, superior to any thing I expected to find amongst the ancient edifices of Hindoostaun.

The antique arches supporting the roof, rest on pillars of a good size; the whole are beautifully carved. The dome, which was originally in the centre of this pavilion, has been nearly destroyed by time; and although the light thus thrown into the interior through the aperture, has a good effect, it pained me to see this noble edifice falling to decay for the want of timely repairs. Notwithstanding this Durgah is said to have been built so many years, the stone-work, both of the interior and exterior, is remarkably fresh in appearance, and would almost discredit its reputed age. The walls and bastions of the enclosure appear firm on their foundations; the upper part only seems at all decayed.

The side rooms to the Durgah, of which there are several on each side of the building, have all a fretwork of stone very curiously cut, which serves for windows, and admits light and air to the apartments, and presents a good screen to persons within; this it should seem was the only contrivance for windows in general use by the ancient inhabitants of Hindoostaun; and even at the present day (excepting a few Native gentlemen who have benefited by English example), glazed windows are not seen in any of the mansions in the Upper Provinces of India.

I noticed that in a few places in these buildings, where the prospect is particularly fine, small arches were left open, from whence the eye is directed to grand and superb scenery, afforded by the surrounding country, and the remains of stately buildings. From one of these arches the killaah is seen to great advantage, at the distance of two miles: both the Durgah and the killaah are erected on high points of land. I have often, whilst wandering outside the killaah, looked up at the elevation with sensations of mistrust, that whilst doing so it might, from its known insecure state, fall and bury me in its ruins; but viewing it from that distance, and on a level with the Durgah, the appearance was really gratifying.

At Kannoge are to be seen many mukhburrahs, said to have been erected over the remains of those Hindoos who at different periods had been converted to the Mussulmaun faith. This city, I am informed, has been the chosen spot of righteous men and sainted characters during all periods of the Mussulmaun rule in Hindoostaun, by whose example many idolators were brought to have respect for the name of God, and in some instances even to embrace the Mahumudan faith. Amongst the many accounts of remarkable conversions related to me by the old inhabitants of that city, I shall select one which, however marvellous in some points, is nevertheless received with full credit by the faithful of the present day:—

'A very pious Syaad took up his residence many hundred years since at Kannoge, when the chief part of the inhabitants were Hindoos, and, as might be expected, many of them were Brahmins. He saw with grief the state of darkness with which the minds of so many human beings were imbued, and without exercising any sort of authority over them, he endeavoured by the mildest persuasions to convince these people that the adoration they paid to graven images, and the views they entertained of the river Ganges possessing divine properties, were both absurd and wicked.

'The Syaad used his best arguments to explain to them the power and attributes of the only true God; and though his labours were unceasing, and his exemplary life made him beloved, yet for a long period all his endeavours proved unsuccessful. His advice, however, was at all times tendered with mildness, his manners so humble, and his devotion so remarkable, that in the course of time the people flocked around him, whenever he was visible, to listen to his discourse, which generally contained some words of well-timed exhortation and kind instruction. His great aim was directed towards enlightening the Brahmins, by whom, he was aware, the opinions of the whole population were influenced, and to whom alone was confined such knowledge as at that remote period was conveyed by education.

'Ardently zealous in the great work he had commenced, the Syaad seemed undaunted by the many obstacles he had to contend with. Always retaining his temper unruffled, he combined perseverance with his solicitude, and trusted in God for a happy result in His good time. On an occasion of a great Hindoo festival the population of the then immense city were preparing to visit the Ganges, where they expected to be purified from their sins by ablution in that holy river, as they term it. The Ganges, at that period, I understand, flowed some miles distant from the city.

'The Syaad took this occasion to exhort the multitude to believe in God; and after a preliminary discourse, explaining the power of Him whom he alone worshipped, he asked the people if they would be persuaded to follow the only true God, if His power should be demonstrated to them by the appearance of the river they adored flowing past the city of Kannoge, instead of, as at that moment, many miles distant. Some of his auditory laughed at the idea, and derided the speaker; others doubted, and asked whether the God whom the Mussulmauns worshipped possessed such power as the Syaad had attributed to Him; many Brahmins, however, agreed to the terms proposed, solemnly assuring the holy man

he should find them converts to his faith if this miracle should be effected by the God he worshipped.

'It is related that the Syaad passed the whole day and night in devout prayers; and when the morning dawned the idolators saw the river Ganges flowing past the city in all the majesty of that mighty stream.[15] The Brahmins were at once convinced, and this evidence of God's power worked the way to the conversion of nearly the whole population of Kannoge.'

The number of the inhabitants may be supposed to have been immensely great at the period in question, as it is related that on the occasion of their conversion the Brahmins threw away the cords which distinguish them from other castes of Hindoos, (each cord weighing about a drachm English), which when collected together to be consigned to the flames, were weighed, and found to be upwards of forty-five seers; a seer in that province being nearly equal to two pounds English.[16]

The Brahmins, it will be recollected, form but a small portion of that community, and are the priesthood of the Hindoos, very similar in their order to the Levites among the children of Israel.

There are still remaining traces of monuments erected over the remains of converted Hindoos, which have been particularly pointed out to me by intelligent men, from whom I have received information of that great work which alone would render Kannoge a place of interest without another object to attract the observation of a reflecting mind.

Notwithstanding that the Ganges continues to water the banks of Kannoge, and that other proofs exist of idolatry having ceased for a considerable time to disgrace the inhabitants, it is still partially occupied by Hindoos, who retain the custom of their forefathers according to the original, whether descendants of the converted, or fresh settlers is not in my power to determine; but I may remark, without prejudice, from what I have been enabled to glean in conversation with a few Hindoos of this city, that they have a better idea of one over-ruling Supreme power than I have ever been able to find elsewhere in the same class of people.

I was much interested with an old blacksmith, who was employed at the killaah. On one occasion I asked him what views he entertained of the Source from whence all good proceeds—whether he believed in God? He replied promptly, and as if surprised that such a doubt could exist, 'Yes, surely; it is to Allah (God) the supreme, I am indebted for my existence; Allah created all things, the world and all that is in it: I could not have been here at this moment, but for the goodness of Allah!'

There are amongst them men of good moral character, yet in a state of deplorable ignorance, a specimen of which may be here noticed in a person of property employed in the service of Government, at the killaah; he is of the caste denominated Burghutt[17],—one of the tribe which professes so great reverence for life, as to hold it sinful to destroy the meanest reptile or insect; and, therefore, entirely abstain from eating either fish, flesh,

or fowl:—yet, when I pressed for his undisguised opinion, I found that he not only denied the existence of God, but declared it was his belief the world formed itself.

I was induced to walk three miles from the killaah, on a cool day in December, to view the remains of a piece of sculpture of great antiquity. I confess myself but little acquainted with Hindoo mythology, and therefore my description will necessarily be imperfect. The figure of Luchmee is represented in relief, on a slab of stone eight feet by four, surrounded by about a hundred figures in different attitudes. Luchmee, who is of course the most prominent, is figured with eight arms; in his right hands, are sabres, in his left, shields; his left foot upon the hand of a female, and the right on a snake.[18] This figure is about four feet high, and finely formed, standing in a martial attitude; his dress (unlike that of the modern Hindoo) is represented very tight, and, altogether, struck me as more resembling the European than the Asiatic: on his head I remarked a high-crowned military cap without a peak: the feet were bare. There can be no doubt this figure is emblematical; the Hindoos, however, make it an object of their impure and degrading worship.

I could not help expressing my surprise on finding this idol in such excellent condition, having had so many samples throughout Kannoge of the vengeance exercised by Mussulmaun zeal, on the idols of the Hindoos. My guide assured me, that this relic of antiquity had only been spared from the general destruction of by-gone periods by its having been buried, through the supposed influence of unconverted venerating Brahmins; but that within the last thirty years it had been discovered and dug out of the earth, to become once more an ornament to the place. My own ideas lead me to suppose that it might have been buried by the same convulsion of the earth which overturned the idolatrous city.

I observed that a very neat little building, of modern date, was erected over this antiquity, and on inquiry found that the Hindoos were indebted to the liberality of a lady for the means of preserving this relic from the ravages of the seasons.

There is in the same vicinity a second piece of mythological sculpture, in a less perfect state than Luchmee, the sabred arm of which has been struck off, and the figure otherwise mutilated by the zealous Mussulmauns, who have invariably defaced or broken the idols wherever they have been able to do so with impunity. On a platform of stone and earth, near this place, a finely-formed head of stone is placed, which my guide gravely assured me was of very ancient date, and represented Adam, the father of men!

I heard with pain during my sojourn at Kannoge, that the house of God had been made the resort of thieves; a well-known passage of Scripture struck me forcibly when the transaction was related.

I have before stated that the mosque is never allowed to be locked or closed to the public. Beneath the one I am about to speak of (a very ancient building near to Baallee Peer's Durgah), is a vaulted suite of rooms denominated taarkhanah[19], intended as a retreat from the intense heat of the day; such as is to be met with in most great men's residences

in India. In this place, a gang of thieves from the city had long found a secure and unsuspected spot wherein to deposit their plunder. It happened, however, that very strict search was instituted after some stolen property belonging to an individual of Kannoge; whether any suspicions had been excited about the place in question, I do not recollect, but thither the police directed their steps, and after removing some loose earth they discovered many valuable articles,—shawls, gold ornaments, sabres, and other costly articles of plunder. It is presumed,—for the thieves were not known or discovered,—that they could not possibly be Mussulmauns, since the very worst characters among this people hold the house of God in such strict veneration, that they, of all persons, could not be suspected of having selected so sacred a place to deposit the spoils of the plunderer.

The process of obtaining nitre from the earth is practised at Kannoge by the Natives in the most simple way imaginable, without any assistance from art. They discover the spot where nitre is deposited by the small white particles which work through the strata of earth to the surface. When a vein is discovered, to separate the nitre from the earth, the following simple method is resorted to:—large troughs filled with water are prepared, into which the masses of earth containing nitre are thrown; the earth is allowed to remain undisturbed for some time, after which it is well stirred, and then allowed to settle; the water by this means becomes impregnated with the nitre, and is afterwards boiled in large iron pans, from which all the dirt is carefully skimmed, until the water is completely evaporated, and the nitre deposited in the pans.

I know not how far the admixture of animal bodies with the soil may tend to produce this article, but it is a fact, that those places which bear the strongest proofs of having received the bodies of both men and beasts, produce it in the greatest abundance.[20]

The retirement of Kannoge afforded me so many pleasant ways of occupying time, that I always look back to the period of my sojourn at the old killaah with satisfaction. The city is sufficiently distant from the killaah to leave the latter within reach of supplies, without the annoyance of the bustle and confusion inseparable from a Native city. In my daily wanderings a few peasantry only crossed my path; the farmers and citizens were always attentive, and willing to do us such kind offices as we at any time required. They respected, I may say venerated my husband; and I must own that my feelings oblige me to remember with gratitude the place and the people whence I drew so many benefits.

Here I could indulge in long walks without incurring the penalty of a departure from established custom, which in most well-populated parts of Hindoostaun restrains European ladies from the exercise so congenial to their health and cherished habits. Should any English-woman venture to walk abroad in the city of Lucknow, for instance,—to express their most liberal opinion of the act,—she would be judged by the Natives as a person careless of the world's opinion. But here I was under no such constraint; my walks were daily recreations after hours of quiet study in the most romantic retirement of a ruined killaah, where, if luxury consists in perfect satisfaction with the objects by which we are surrounded, I may boast that it was found here during my two years' residence.

[1] This is incorrect. Hindu traditions refer to a deluge, in which Manu, with the help of a fish, makes a ship, and fastening her cable to the fish's horn, is guided to the mountain, and then he, alone of human beings, is saved.—J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, part ii (1860), p. 324.

[2] This is merely a stupid folk etymology, comparing Kanauj with Cain.

[3] *Qil'a*.

[4] Kali Nadi, 'black stream', a corruption of the original name, Kalindi.

[5] *Tahsildar*.

[6] In the southern centre of the ruined citadel stand the tombs of Bala Pir and his son, Shaikh Mahdi. Shaikh Kabir, commonly called Bala Pir, is said to have been the tutor of the brother Nawabs, Dalel and Bahadur Khan. The former ruled Kanauj in the time of Shah Jahan (A.D. 1628-1651), and died after his deposition in 1666.—A. Führer, *Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions of the N.W. Provinces and Oudh*, 1891, p. 80.

[7] Horseshoes are often nailed on the gates of the tombs of Musalman saints, as at the mosque of Fatehpur Sikri.

[8] *Pir*, 'a saint, a holy man'.

[9] *Maqbara*, 'a sepulchre'.

[10] The Emperor Aurangzeb, A.D. 1658-1707.

[11] Khalifah, Caliph, one of the terms which have suffered degradation, often applied to cooks, tailors, barbers, or other Musalman servants.

[12] This may be the building known as Sita ki Rasoi, the kitchen of Sita, heroine of the Ramayana epic. It is described and drawn by Mrs. F. Parks (*Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, ii. 143).

[13] Butkhana.

[14] The tomb of the Saint Sa'id Shaikh Makhdum Jahaniya Jahangasht of Multan (A.D. 1308-81). Führer, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

[15] Many saints are credited with the power of changing the courses of rivers: see instances in W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of N. India*, 2nd ed., ii. 218.

[16] This may be a variant of the story that after the capture of Chitor, Akbar weighed 74-1/2 *man* (8 lbs. each) of cords belonging to the slain Rajputs.—J. Tod, *Annals of Rajasthan*, 1884, i. 349.

[17] The name has not been traced. The reference is to Jains, who are specially careful of animal life.

[18] If this is a male figure it cannot represent the goddess Lakshmi. Mrs. Parks (*Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, ii. 144) speaks of images of Rama and his brother Lakshmana, one of which may possibly be that referred to in the text.

[19] *Tahkhana*, an underground cellar.

[20] This account is fairly correct. 'Although active saltpetre is met with under a variety of conditions, they all agree in this particular, that the salt is formed under the influence of organic matter.'—(G. Watt, *Economic Dictionary*, VI, part ii, 431 *ff*).

LETTER XX

Delhi.—Description of the city.—Marble hall—The Queen's Mahul (palace).—Audience with the King and Queen.—Conversation with them.—Character of their Majesties.—Visit to a Muckburrah.—Soobadhaars.—The nature of the office.—Durgah of Shah Nizaam ood deen.—Tomb of Shah Allum.—Ruins in the vicinity of Delhi. —Antique pillars (Kootub) .—Prospect from its galleries.—Anecdotes of Juangheer and Khareem Zund…Page 289

My visit to Delhi, once the great capital of Hindoostaun, and the residence of the great Sultauns, has made impressions of a lasting kind, and presented a moral lesson to my mind, I should be sorry to forget in after years; for there I witnessed the tombs of righteous men in perfect repair after the lapse of many centuries, standing in the midst of the mouldering relics of kings, princes, and nobles, many of whose careers, we learn from history, was comparatively of recent date; yet, excepting in one solitary instance of Shah Allum's grave, without so much of order remaining as would tell to the passing traveller the rank of each individual's mausoleum, now either entirely a ruin or fast mouldering to decay.

The original city of Delhi presents to view one vast extent of ruins; abounding in mementos of departed worth, as well as in wrecks of greatness, ingenuity, and magnificence. Why the present city was erected or the former one deserted, I cannot venture an opinion, neither can I remember correctly in what reign the royal residence was changed; but judging from the remnants of the old, I should imagine it to have been equally extensive with the modern Delhi. A part of the old palace is still standing,

whither the present King, Akbaar Shah,[1] occasionally resorts for days together, attracted perhaps by sympathy for his ancestors, or by that desire for change inherent in human nature, and often deemed essential to health in the climate of Hindoostaun.

The city of Delhi is enclosed by a wall; the houses, which are generally of brick or red stone, appear to good advantage, being generally elevated a story or two from the ground-floor, and more regularly constructed than is usual in Native cities. Mosques, mukhburrahs, and emaum-baarahs, in all directions, diversify the scene with good effect; whilst the various shops and bazaars, together with the outpourings of the population to and from the markets, give an animation to the whole view which would not be complete without them.

The palace occupies an immense space of ground, enclosed by high walls, and entered by a gateway of grand architecture. On either side the entrance I noticed lines of compact buildings, occupied by the military, reaching to the second gateway, which is but little inferior in style and strength to the grand entrance; and here again appear long lines of buildings similarly occupied. I passed through several of these formidable barriers before I reached the marble hall, where the King holds his durbar (court) at stated times; but as mine was a mere unceremonious visit to the King and Queen, it was not at the usual hour of durbar, and I passed through the hall without making any particular observations, although I could perceive it was not deficient in the costliness and splendour suited to the former greatness of the Indian empire.

After being conveyed through several splendid apartments, I was conducted to the Queen's mahul[2] (palace for females), where his Majesty and the Queen were awaiting my arrival. I found on my entrance the King seated in the open air in an arm chair enjoying his hookha; the Queen's musnud was on the ground, close by the side of her venerable husband. Being accustomed to Native society, I knew how to render the respect due from an humble individual to personages of their exalted rank. After having left my shoes at the entrance and advanced towards them, my salaams were tendered, and then the usual offering of nuzzas, first to the King and then to the Queen, who invited me to a seat on her own carpet,—an honour I knew how to appreciate from my acquaintance with the etiquette observed on such occasions.

The whole period of my visit was occupied in very interesting conversation; eager inquiries were made respecting England, the Government, the manners of the Court, the habits of the people, my own family affairs, my husband's views in travelling, and his adventures in England, my own satisfaction as regarded climate, and the people with whom I was so immediately connected by marriage;—the conversation, indeed, never flagged an instant, for the condescending courtesy of their Majesties encouraged me to add to their entertainment, by details which seemed to interest and delight them greatly.

On taking leave his Majesty very cordially shook me by the hand, and the Queen embraced me with warmth. Both appeared, and expressed themselves, highly gratified with the visit of an English lady who could explain herself in their language without embarrassment, or the assistance of an interpreter, and who was the more interesting to

them from the circumstance of being the wife of a Syaad; the Queen indeed was particular in reminding me that 'the Syaads were in a religious point of view, the nobles of the Mussulmauns, and reverenced as such far more than those titled characters who receive their distinction from their fellow-mortals'.

I was grieved to be obliged to accept the Queen's parting present of an embroidered scarf, because I knew her means were exceedingly limited compared with the demands upon her bounty; but I could not refuse that which was intended to do me honour at the risk of wounding those feelings I so greatly respected. A small ring, of trifling value, was then placed by the Queen on my finger, as she remarked, 'to remind me of the giver.'

The King's countenance, dignified by age, possesses traces of extreme beauty; he is much fairer than Asiatics usually are; his features are still fine, his hair silvery white; intelligence beams upon his brow, his conversation gentle and refined, and his condescending manners hardly to be surpassed by the most refined gentleman of Europe. I am told by those who have been long intimate with his habits in private, that he leads a life of strict piety and temperance, equal to that of a durweish[3] of his faith, whom he imitates in expending his income on others without indulging in a single luxury himself.

The Queen's manners are very amiable and condescending; she is reported to be as highly gifted with intellectual endowments as I can affirm she is with genuine politeness.

I was induced to visit the mukhburrah of the great-great-grandfather of the present King of Oude,[4] who, at his death,—which occurred at Delhi, I believe,—was one of the Soobadhaars[5] of the sovereign ruler of India. This nobleman, in his time, had been a staunch adherent to the descendants of Timoor, and had been rewarded for his fidelity by public honours and the private friendship of the King. The monument erected over his remains, is in a costly style of magnificence, and in the best possible condition, standing in the centre of a flower-garden which is enclosed by a stone wall, with a grand gateway of good architecture. The mukhburrah is spacious, and in the usual Mussulmaun style of building mausoleums; viz., a square, with a dome, and is ascended by a flight of broad steps. This building stands about three miles from the city, in a good situation to be seen from the road. I was told that the family of Oude kept readers of the Khoraun in constant attendance at the mukhburrah; and I observed several soldiers, whose duty it was to guard the sacred spot, at the expense of the Oude government.

In explanation of the word Soobadhaar, it may not be uninteresting to remark in this place, that when the government of Hindoostaun flourished under the descendants of Timoor, Soobadhaars were appointed over districts, whose duty, in some respects, bore resemblance to that of a Governor; with this difference, that the soobadhaaries were gifts, not only for the life of the individuals, but to their posterity for ever, under certain restrictions and stipulations which made them tributary to, and retained them as dependants of, the reigning sovereign:—as for instance, a certain annual amount was to be punctually transferred to the treasury at Delhi; the province to be governed by the same laws, and the subjects to be under the same control in each Soobadhaarie as those of the parent sovereignty; the revenue exacted in the very same way,; each Soobadhaar was

bound to retain in his employ a given number of soldiers, horse and foot, fully equipped for the field, with perfect liberty to employ them as occasion served in the territory which he governed, whether against refractory subjects, or encroachments from neighbouring provinces; but in any emergency from the Court at Delhi, the forces to be, at all times, in readiness for the Sultaun's service at a moment's notice.

The gift of a Soobadhaarie was originally conferred on men who had distinguished themselves, either in the army, or in civil capacities, as faithful friends and servants of the Sultaun. In the course of time, some of these Soobadhaars, probably from just causes, threw off their strict allegiance to their Sovereign, abandoned the title of Soobadhaar, and adopted that of Nuwaub in its stead, either with or without the consent of the Court of Delhi.

As it is not my intention to give a precise history of the Indian empire, but merely to touch on generalities, I have confined my remarks to a brief explanation of the nature of this office; and will only add, that whilst the Soobadhaars (afterwards the Nuwaubs) of Oude swayed over that beautiful province under these titles, they continued to send their usual nuzzas to the King of Delhi, although no longer considered under his dominion; thus acknowledging his superiority, because inferiors only present nuzzas. But when Ghauzee ood deen Hyder was created King of Oude, he could no longer be considered tributary to the House of Timoor, and the annual ceremony of sending a nuzza, I understood, was discontinued. The first King of Oude issued coins from his new mint almost immediately after his coronation, prior to which period the current money of that province bore the stamp of Delhi.[6]

Shah Nizaam ood deen[7] was one of the many Mussulmaun saints, whose history has interested me much. He is said to have been dead about five hundred years, yet his memory is cherished by the Mussulmauns of the present day with veneration unabated by the lapse of years, thus giving to the world a moral and a religious lesson, 'The great and the ambitious perish, and their glory dieth with them; but the righteous have a name amongst their posterity for ever.'

I was familiar with the character of Nizaam ood deen long prior to my visit at the Court of Delhi, and, as maybe supposed, it was with no common feeling of pleasure I embraced the opportunity of visiting the mausoleum erected over the remains of that righteous man.

The building originally was composed of the hard red stone, common to the neighbourhood of Delhi, with an occasional mixture of red bricks of a very superior quality; but considerable additions and ornamental improvements of pure white marble have been added to the edifice, from time to time, by different monarchs and nobles of Hindoostaun, whose pious respect for the memory of the righteous Shah Nizaam ood deen is testified by these additions, which render the mausoleum at the present time as fresh and orderly as if but newly erected.

The style of the building is on the original, I might say, only plan of Mussulmaun mukhburrahs—square, with a cupola. It is a beautiful structure on a scale of moderate

size. The pavements are of marble, as are also the pillars, which are fluted and inlaid with pure gold; the ceiling is of chaste enamel painting (peculiarly an Indian art, I fancy,) of the brightest colours. The cupola is of pure white marble, of exquisite workmanship and in good taste; its erection is of recent date, I understand, and the pious offering of the good Akbaar Shah, who, being himself a very religions personage, was determined out of his limited income to add this proof of his veneration for the sainted Nizaam to the many which his ancestors had shown.[8]

The marble tomb enclosing the ashes of Shah Nizaam ood deen is in the centre of the building immediately under the cupola; this tomb is about seven feet long by two, raised about a foot from the pavement; on the marble sides are engraved chapters from the Khoraun in the Arabic character, filled up with black; the tomb itself has a covering of very rich gold cloth, resembling a pall.

This tranquil spot is held sacred by all Mussulmauns. Here the sound of human feet are never heard; 'Put off thy shoes', being quite as strictly observed near this venerated place, as when the mosque and emaum-baarah are visited by 'the faithful'; who, as I have before remarked, whenever a prayer is about to be offered to God, cast off their shoes with scrupulous care, whether the place chosen for worship be in the mosque, the abode of men, or the wilderness.

I was permitted to examine the interior of the mausoleum. The calm stillness, which seemed hardly earthly; the neatness which pervaded every corner of the interior; the recollection of those virtues, which I so often heard had distinguished Shah Nizaam's career on earth, impressed me with feelings at that moment I cannot forget; and it was with reluctance I turned from this object to wander among the surrounding splendid ruins, the only emblems left of departed greatness; where not even a tablet exists to mark the affection of survivors, or to point to the passing traveller the tomb of the monarch, the prince, or the noble,—except in the instance of Shah Allum,—whilst the humble-minded man's place of sepulture is kept repaired from age to age, and still retains the freshness of a modern structure in its five hundredth year.

There are men in charge of Shah Nizaam ood deen's mausoleum who lead devout lives, and subsist on the casual bounties gleaned from the charitable visitors to his shrine. Their time is passed in religious duties, reading the Khoraun over the ashes of the saint, and keeping the place clean and free from unholy intrusions. They do not deem this mode of existence derogatory; for to hold the situation of darogahs, or keepers of the tombs of the saints, who are held in universal veneration amongst Mussulmauns, is esteemed an honourable privilege.

In this sketch of my visit to the tombs at Delhi, I must not omit one very remarkable cemetery, which, as the resting place of the last reigning sovereign of Hindoostaun, excited in me no small degree of interest, whilst contrasting the view it exhibited of fallen greatness, with the many evidences of royal magnificence.

The tomb I am about to describe is that erected over the remains of Shah Allum;[9] and situated within view of the mausoleum of the righteous plebeian, Shah Nizaam. It is a simple, unadorned grave; no canopy of marble, or decorated hall, marks here the peaceful rest of a monarch, who in his life-time was celebrated for the splendour of his Court; a small square spot of earth, enclosed with iron railings, is all that remains to point to posterity the final resting place of the last monarch of Hindoostaun. His grave is made by his favourite daughter's side, whose affection had been his only solace in the last years of his earthly sufferings; a little masonry of brick and plaster supports the mound of earth over his remains, on which I observed the grass was growing, apparently cultured by some friendly hand. At the period of my visit, the solitary ornament to this last terrestrial abode of a King was a luxuriant white jessamine tree, beautifully studded with blossoms, which scented the air around with a delightful fragrance, and scattered many a flower over the grave which it graced by its remarkable beauty, height, and luxuriance. The sole canopy that adorns Shah Allum's grave is the rich sky, with all its resplendent orbs of day and night, or clouds teeming with beneficent showers. Who then could be ambitious, vain, or proud, after viewing this striking contrast to the grave of Shah Nizaam? The vain-glorious humbled even in the tomb;—the humble minded exalted by the veneration ever paid to the righteous.

I was persuaded to visit the ruins of antiquity which are within a morning' s drive of Delhi. Nothing that I there witnessed gave me so much pleasure as the far-famed Kootub, a monument or pillar, of great antiquity, claimed equally by the Hindoo and Mussulmaun as due to their respective periods of sovereign rule. The site is an elevated spot, and from the traces of former buildings, I am disposed to believe this pillar, standing now erect and imposing, was one of the minarets of a mosque, and the only remains of such a building, which must have been very extensive, if the height and dimensions of the minaret be taken as a criterion of the whole.[10]

This pillar has circular stairs within, leading to galleries extending all round, at stated distances, and forming five tiers from the first gallery to the top, which finishes with a circular room, and a canopy of stone, open on every side for the advantage of an extensive prospect. Verses from the Khoraun are cut out in large Arabic characters on the stones, which form portions of the pillar from the base to the summit in regular divisions; this could only be done with great labour, and, I should imagine, whilst the blocks of stone were on the level surface of the earth, which renders it still more probable that it was a Mussulmaun erection.

The view from the first gallery was really so magnificent, that I was induced to ascend to the second for a still bolder extent of prospect, which more than repaid me the task. I never remember to have seen so picturesque a panorama in any other place. Some of my party, better able to bear the fatigue, ascended to the third and fourth gallery. From them I learned that the beauty and extent of the view progressively increased until they reached the summit, from whence the landscape which fell beneath the eye surpassed description.

On the road back to Delhi, we passed some extensive remains of buildings, which I found on inquiry had been designed for an observatory by Jhy Sing,[11]—whose extraordinary

mind has rendered his name conspicuous in the annals of Hindoostaun,—but which was not completed while he lived. It may be presumed, since the work was never finished, that his countrymen either have not the talent, or the means to accomplish the scientific plan his superior mind had contemplated.

At the time I visited Delhi, I had but recently recovered from a serious and tedious illness; I was therefore ill-fitted to pursue those researches which might have afforded entertaining material for my pen, and must, on that account, take my leave of this subject with regret, for the present, and merely add my acknowledgments to those kind friends who aided my endeavours in the little I was enabled to witness of that remarkable place, which to have viewed entirely would have taken more time and better health than I could command at that period. I could have desired to search out amongst the ruined mausoleums for those which contain the ashes of illustrious characters, rendered familiar and interesting by the several anecdotes current in Native society, to many of which I have listened with pleasure, as each possessed some good moral for the mind.

It is my intention to select two anecdotes for my present Letter, which will, I trust, prove amusing to my readers; one relates to Jhaungeer,[12] King of India; the other to Kaareem Zund, King of Persia. I am not aware that either has appeared before the public in our language, although they are so frequently related by the Natives in their domestic circles. If they have not, I need hardly apologise for introducing them, and on the other hand, if they have before been seen, I may plead my ignorance of the circumstance in excuse for their insertion here.

I have already noticed that, among the true Mussulmauns, there are no religious observances more strictly enforced than the keeping the fast of Rumzaun, and the abstaining from fermented liquors. It is related, however, that 'A certain king of India, named Jhaungeer, was instructed by his tutors in the belief, that on the day of judgment, kings and rulers will not have to answer either for the sin of omission or commission, as regards these two commands; but that the due administration of justice to the subjects over whom they are placed, will be required at the hands of every king, ruler, or governor, on the face of the earth.

'Jhaungeer was determined to walk strictly in the path which he was assured would lead him to a happy eternity; and, therefore, in his reign every claim of justice was most punctiliously discharged. Each case requiring decision was immediately brought to the foot of the throne; for the King would not allow business of such importance to his soul's best interest to be delegated to the guardianship of his Vizier, or other of his servants; and in order to give greater facility to complainants of every degree, the King invented the novel contrivance of a large bell, which was fixed immediately over his usual seat on the musnud, which bell could be sounded by any one outside the palace gate, by means of a stout rope staked to the ground. Whenever this alarum of justice was sounded in the King's ear, he sent a trusty messenger to conduct the complainant into his presence.[13]

'One day, upon the bell being violently rung, the messenger was commanded to bring in the person requiring justice. When the messenger reached the gate, he found no other

creature near the place but a poor sickly-looking ass, in search of a scanty meal from the stunted grass, which was dried up by the scorching sun, and blasts of hot wind which at that season prevailed. The man returned and reported to the King that there was no person at the gate.

'The King was much surprised at the singularity of the circumstance, and whilst he was talking of the subject with his nobles and courtiers, the bell was again rung with increased violence. The messenger being a second time despatched, returned with the same answer, assuring the King that there was not any person at or within sight of the gate. The King, suspecting him to be a perverter of justice, was displeased with the man, and even accused him of keeping back a complainant from interested motives. It was in vain the messenger declared himself innocent of so foul a crime; a third time the bell rang, "Go," said the King to his attendants, "and bring the supplicant into my presence immediately!" The men went, and on their return informed the King that the only living creature near the gate was an ass, poor and manged, seeking a scanty meal from the parched blades of grass. "Then let the ass be brought hither!" said the King; "perhaps *he* may have some complaint to prefer against his owner."

'The courtiers smiled when the ass was brought into the presence of the monarch, who upon seeing the poor half-starved beast covered with sores, was at no loss for a solution of the mysterious ringing at the bell, for the animal not finding a tree or post against which he could rub himself, had made use of the bell-rope for that purpose.

"Enquire for the owner of the ass!" commanded the King, "and let him be brought before me without delay!" The order promptly given, was as readily obeyed; and the hurkaarahs (messengers, or running footmen) in a short time introduced a poor Dhobhie[14] (washerman) who had owned the ass from a foal. The plaintiff and defendant were then placed side by side before the throne, when the King demanded, "Why the sick ass was cast out to provide for itself a precarious subsistence?" The Dhobhie replied, "In truth, O Jahaum-punah![15] (Protector or Ruler of the World), because he is grown old and unserviceable, afflicted with mange, and being no longer able to convey my loads of linen to the river, I gave him his liberty."

'"Friend," said the King, "when this thine ass was young and healthy, strong and lusty, didst thou not derive benefits from his services? Now that he is old, and unable from sickness to render thee further benefits, thou hast cast him from thy protection, and sent him adrift on the wide world; gratitude should have moved thee to succour and feed so old and faithful a servant, rather than forsake him in his infirmities. Thou hast dealt unjustly with this thy creature; but, mark me, I hold thee responsible to repair the injury thou hast done the ass. Take him to thy home, and at the end of forty days attend again at this place, accompanied by the ass, and compensate to the best of thy power, by kind treatment, for the injury thou hast done him by thy late hard-hearted conduct."

'The Dhobhie, glad to escape so well, went away leading the ass to his home, fed him with well-soaked gram (grain in general use for cattle), and nicely-picked grass, sheltered him from the burning sun, poured healing oil into his wounds, and covered his back to

keep off the flies; once a day he bathed him in the river. In short, such expedients were resorted to for the comfort and relief of the ass, as were ultimately attended with the happiest effects.

'At the expiration of the forty days, the Dhobhie set off from his home to the palace, leading his now lively ass by a cord. On the road the passers-by were filled with amazement and mirth, at the manners and expressions of the Dhobhie towards his led ass. "Come along, brother!—Make haste, son!—Let us be quick, father!—Take care, uncle!"

'"What means the old fool?" was asked by some; "does he make his ass a relation?"—"In truth," replied the Dhobhie, "my ass is a very dear old friend, and what is more, he has been a greater expense to me than all my relations latterly: believe me, it has cost me much care and pains to bring this ass into his present excellent condition." Then relating the orders of the King, and his own subsequent treatment of the beast, the people no longer wondered at the simple Dhobhie's expressions which had prompted them at first to believe he was mad.

'The King, it is related, received the Dhobhie graciously, and commended and rewarded him for his careful attention to the animal; which in his improved condition became more useful to his master than he had ever been, through the King's determination to enforce justice even to the brute creation.'

The second anecdote, translated for me by the same kind hand, is often related, with numerous embellishments, under the title of 'Khareem Zund'.[16]

'Khareem Zund ruled in Persia. One day he was seated in the verandah of his palace smoking his hookha, and, at the same time, as was his frequent practice, overlooking the improvements carried on by masons and labourers, under the superintendence of a trusty servant. One of the labourers, who was also named Khareem, had toiled long, and sought to refresh himself with a pipe. The overseer of the work, seeing the poor man thus engaged, approached him in great wrath, rated him severely for his presumption in smoking whilst he stood in the presence of his sovereign, and striking him severely with a stick, snatched the pipe from the labourer and threw it away. The poor wretch cared not for the weight of the blow so much as for the loss of his pipe: his heart was oppressed with the weight of his sorrows, and raising his eyes to Heaven he cried aloud, "Allah Khareem!"[17] (God is merciful!), then lowering his eyes, his glance rested on the King, "App Khareem!" (thou art named merciful!), from whom withdrawing his eyes slowly he looked at his own mean body, and added, "Myn Khareem!" (I am called merciful!).

'The King, who had heard the labourer's words, and witnessed with emotion the impressive manner of lifting his eyes to Heaven, had also seen the severity of the overseer to the unoffending labourer; he therefore commanded that the man should be brought into his presence without delay, who went trembling, and full of fear that his speech had drawn some heavy punishment on his head.

'"Sit down," said the King.—"My sovereign pardon his slave!" replied the labourer.—"I do not jest; it is my pleasure that you sit down," repeated the King; and when he saw his humble guest seated, he ordered his own silver hookha to be brought and placed before the poor man, who hesitated to accept the gracious offer; but the King assured him in the kindest manner possible it was his wish and his command. The labourer enjoyed the luxury of a good hookha, and by the condescending behaviour of the King his composure gradually returned.

'This King, who it would seem delighted in every opportunity that offered of imparting pleasure and comfort to his subjects of all ranks and degrees, seeing the labourer had finished his second chillum[18] (contents of a pipe) told him he had permission to depart, and desired him to take the hookha and keep it for his sake. "Alas, my King!" said the labourer, "this costly silver pipe will soon be stolen from me; my mud hut cannot safely retain so valuable a gift; the poor mazoor[19] inhabits but a chupha (or coarse grass-roofed) hut."—"Then take materials from my store-houses to build a house suited to your hookha," was the order he received from the King; "and let it be promptly done! I design to make you one of my overseers; for *you*, Khareem, have been the instrument to rouse *me* to be Khareem (merciful); and I can now approach Allah with increased confidence. Who is the only true Khareem!"'

[1] Akbar Shah II, King of Delhi, A.D. 1806-37.

[2] *Mahall*.

[3] *Darvesh*, 'a religious mendicant'.

[4] Mansur 'Ali Khan, Safdar Jang, Nawab of Oudh (A.D. 1739-56), his successors being—his son, Shuja-ud-daula (1756-75); his son, Asaf-ud-daula (1775-97); his reputed son Wazir 'Ali (1797-8); Sa'a dat 'Ali Khan, half-brother of Asaf-ud-daula (1798-1814); his son, Ghazi-ud-din Haidar (1814-37). The tomb of Safdar Jang is near that of the Emperor Humayun. 'This tomb in one of the last great Muhammadan architectural efforts in India, and for its age it deserves perhaps more commendation than is usually accorded to it. Though the general arrangement of the tomb in the same as that of the Taj, it was not intended to be a copy of the latter' (H.C. Fanshawe, *Delhi Past and Present*, 1902, 246 f., with a photograph). For a different appreciation, see Sleeman, *Rambles*, p. 507.

[5] *Subahdar*, the Viceroy or Governor of a Subah or Province of the Moghul Empire.

[6] Ghazi-ud-din announced his independence of Delhi under the advice of his Minister, Agha Mir.

[7] Shaikh Nizam-ud-din. Auliya, one of the noblest disciples of Shaikh Farid-ud-din Shakkarganj; born at Budaun, A.D. 1236, died at Delhi, 1325.

[8] The entrance to the Dargah was built by Firoz Shah, and bears the date A.D. 1378. The structure over the tomb has been rebuilt by many pious donors, and little of the original work is left (Fanshawe, op. cit., 235 ff.; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 490 ff., 507).

[9] Shah 'Alam II, King of Delhi, A.D. 1759-1806. 'Three royal graves in the little court to the south side of the mosque lie within a single marble enclosure—that on the last is the resting-place of Akbar Shah II (died 1837 A.D.); the next to it is that of Shah Alam II (died 1806), and then beyond an empty space, intended for the grave of Bahadur Shah, [the last King of Delhi], buried at Rangoon, comes the tomb of Shah Alam Bahadur Shah, a plain stone with grass on it' (Fanshawe, 281 f.; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 500).

[10] Qutb, 'the polar star'. The pillar, 238 feet in height, was begun by Qutb-ud-di Aibak (A.D. 1206-10), and there are inscriptions of Altamsh or Iltutmish, his son-in-law. It is entirely of Muhammadan origin, and was primarily intended to serve as a minaret to Qutb-ud-din's mosque adjoining it; but its name refers to the saint Qutb-ud-din, buried close by. (Fanshawe, 265 ff.; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 492 ff.)

[11] This observatory was built by Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur (A.D. 1693-1743) in 1724. He also erected similar observatories at Benares, Multan, Ujjain, and Jaipur (Fanshawe, 247).

[12] Jahangir, eldest son of the Emperor Akbar, reigned A.D. 1605-27.

[13] 'The first order that I issued was for the setting up of a Chain of Justice, so that if the Officers of the Courts of Justice should fail in the investigation of the complaints of the oppressed, the injured person might come to this chain and shake it, and so give notice of their wrongs. I ordered that the chain should be made of pure gold, and be thirty *gaz* [yards] long, with sixty bells upon it. The weight of it was four Hindustani *mans* [8 lb.] of 'Irak. One end was firmly attached to a battlement of the fort of Agra, the other to a stone column on the bank of the river' (*Memoirs of Jahangir* in Sir H.M. Elliot, *History of India*, vi. 284). It does not appear that this silly contrivance was ever used, and it was meant only for parade. Raja Anangpal had already set up a similar bell at Delhi (ibid. vi. 262, iii. 565).

[14] *Dhobi*.

[15] *Jahan-panah*.

[16] Karim Khan, of the Zand tribe, defeated the Afghans and secured the Kingdom of Fars or Southern Persia, with his capital at Shiraz. He died at an advanced age, A.D. 1779 (Sir J. Malcolm, *History of Persia*, 1829, ii. 58 ff.).

[17] *Allah Karim, Ap Karim, Main Karim*.

[18] *Chilam*, the clay bowl of a water-pipe: its contents.

[19] *Mazdur*, a day labourer.

LETTER XXI

Natural Productions of India.—Trees, shrubs, plants, fruits, &c.—Their different uses and medicinal qualities.—The Rose.—Native medical practice.—Antidote to Hydrophobia.—Remedy for the venom of the Snake.—The Chitcherah (Inverted thorn).—The Neam-tree.—The Hurrundh (Castor-tree).—The Umultass (Cassia-tree).—The Myrtle.—The Pomegranate.—The Tamarind.—The Jahmun.—The Mango.—The Sherrefah.—White and red Guavers.—The Damascus Fig.—The Peach, and other Fruits.—The Mahdhaar (Fire-plant).—The Sirrakee and Sainturh (Jungle-grass).—The Bamboo, and its various uses enumerated.

In Europe we are accustomed to cultivate the rose merely as an ornament of the garden. This is not the case with my Indian acquaintance; they cultivate the rose as a useful article, essential to their health, and conducive to their comfort.

The only rose I have ever seen them solicitous about is the old-fashioned 'hundred-leaf' or cabbage-rose'.[1] Where-ever a Mussulmaun population congregate these are found planted in enclosed fields. In the month of September, the rose trees are cut down to within eight inches of the surface of the earth, and the cuttings carefully planted in a sheltered situation for striking, to keep up a succession of young trees. By the first or second week in December the earliest roses of the season are in bloom on the new wood, which has made its way from the old stock in this short period. Great care is taken in gathering the roses to preserve every bud for a succession. A gardener in India is distressed when the Beeby Sahibs[2] (English ladies) pluck roses, aware that buds and all are sacrificed at once. I shall here give a brief account of the several purposes to which the rose is applied.

Rose-water is distilled in most Mussulmaun families as a medicine and an indispensable luxury. For medicine, it is administered in all cases of indigestion and pains of the stomach or bowels,—the older the rose-water the more effectual the remedy. I have been accustomed to see very old rose-water administered in doses of a wine-glass full, repeated frequently, in cases of cholera morbus and generally with good effect, when the patient has applied the remedy in time and due care has been observed in preventing the afflicted person from taking any other liquid until the worst symptoms have subsided. This method of treatment may not accord with the views of professional men generally; however, I only assert what I have repeatedly seen, that it has been administered to many members of my husband's family with the best possible effect. On one occasion, after eating a hearty dinner, Meer Hadjee Shaah was attacked with cholera; rose-water was administered, with a small portion of the stone called zahur morah. In his agony, he complained of great thirst, when rose-water was again handed to him, and continued at intervals of half-an-hour during the day and part of the night. In the morning, the pain and

symptoms had greatly subsided; he was, notwithstanding, restrained from taking any liquid or food for more than forty-eight hours, except occasionally a little rose-water; and when his Native doctors permitted him to receive nourishment, he was kept on very limited portions of arrow-root for several days together. At the end of about eight days (the fever having been entirely removed) chicken-broth was allowed, and at first without bread; solids, indeed, were only permitted when all fears of a relapse had ceased, and even then but partially for some time, fearing the consequences to the tender state of the bowels. Such persons as are abstemious and regard the quality of their daily food are most likely to recover from the attack of this awful scourge. Very young children are rarely amongst the sufferers by cholera; the adults of all classes are most subject to it in India; indeed, I do not find the aged or the youthful, either male or female, preponderate in the number attacked; but those who live luxuriously suffer most. Amongst the Natives, it is difficult to prevail on them to forego their usual meals, particularly amongst the lower orders: if they feel rather inconvenienced by heartburns or other indications of a disordered stomach, they cannot resist eating again and again at the appointed hours, after which strong symptoms of cholera usually commence. I never heard of one case occurring after a good night's rest, but invariably after eating, either in the morning or the evening.

My remarks have drawn me from my subject, by explaining the supposed medicinal benefits of rose-water, which as a luxury is highly valued in India. It is frequently used by the Natives in preparing their sweet dishes, is added to their sherbet, sprinkled over favoured guests, used to cleanse the mouth-piece of the hookha, and to cool the face and hands in very hot weather. Although they abstain from the use of rose-water, externally and internally, when suffering from a cold,—they fancy smelling a rose will produce a cold, and I have often observed in India, that smelling a fresh rose induces sneezing,[3]—yet, at all other times, this article is in general use in respectable Mussulmaun families. Dried rose-leaves and cassia added to infusions of senna, is a family medicine in general request.

The fresh rose-leaves are converted by a very simple process into a conserve, which is also used as a medicine; it is likewise an essential article, with other ingredients, in the preparation of tobacco for their luxurious hookha.

A syrup is extracted from the fresh rose, suited admirably to the climate of India as an aperient medicine, pleasant to the taste and mild in its effects. A table-spoon full is considered a sufficient dose for adults.

The seed of the rose is a powerful astringent, and often brought into use in cases of extreme weakness of the bowels. The green leaves are frequently applied pounded as a cold poultice to inflamed places with much the same effect as is produced in England from golard-water.[4]

The oil or otta of roses is collected from the rose-water when first distilled. Persons intending to procure the otta, have the rose-water poured into dishes while warm from the still: this remains undisturbed twenty-four hours, when the oily substance is discovered

on the surface as cream on milk; this is carefully taken off, bottled, the mouth closed with wax, and then exposed to the burning rays of the sun for several days. The rose-water is kept in thin white glass bottles, and placed in baskets for a fortnight, either on the roofs of houses or on a grass-plot; or wherever the sun by day and the dew by night may be calculated on, which act on the rose-water and induce that fragrant smell so peculiar to that of India.

I have elsewhere remarked that the Native medical practice is strictly herbal; minerals are strongly objected to as pernicious in after consequences, although they may prove effectual in removing present inconvenience. Quicksilver[5] is sometimes resorted to by individuals, but without the sanction of their medical practitioners. They have no notion of the anatomy of the human body, beyond a few ideas suggested in the old Grecian school of medicine, in favour of which they are strongly prejudiced. They, however, are said to perform extraordinary cures by simple treatment, many cases of severe fever occurred under my own observation, which were removed, I really believe, by strict attention to diet, or rather starving the enemy from its strong hold, than by any of the medicines administered to the patients. If any one is attacked by fever, his medical adviser inquires the day and the hour it commenced, by which he is guided in prescribing for the patient. On the borehaun[6] (critical days) as the third, fifth, and seventh, after the fever commences, nothing could induce the medical doctor to let blood or administer active medicines; there only remains then for the patient to be debarred any kind of food or nourishment, and that duly observed, the fever is often thrown off without a single dose of medicine. By three or four days of most strict abstinence, and such simple nourishment as the thinnest gruel or barley water,—the latter made from the common field barley, very sparingly allowed, the patient is rendered convalescent.

The Natives of India profess to have found an antidote to, and cure for, hydrophobia in the reetah[7] berry, described as a saponaceous nut. I have never seen a case of hydrophobia, but it is by no means uncommon, I understand. They always advise that the person bitten by a rabid animal, should have the limb promptly tied up with a bandage above and below the bite; the wound, as speedily as possible, to be seared with a red-hot iron, and a few doses of the reetah berry with a portion of soap administered. The berry is well known for its good property in cleansing and softening the hair, for which purpose it is generally found in the bathing-rooms both of the European and Native ladies.

The Native remedy for snake bites, is called neellah tootee[8] (blue vitrol): if from eight to twelve grains be administered in ghee or butter immediately after the bite is received, the happiest results will follow. A person in our family was bitten by a snake, but neglected to apply for the remedy for more than half an hour after the accident, when his own expressions were, that 'he suffered great uneasiness in his body, and his faculties seemed darkened;' half a masha, about eight grains of blue stone, was now given in ghee. In a few hours he was apparently quite well again, and for several days he found no other inconvenience than a slight numbness in the hand which had been bitten by the snake.

This person had occasion soon after to leave home, and had exerted himself unusually by walking, when he found the same symptoms of uneasiness return; he hurried to a house

where he was known, and requested to be supplied with a certain quantity of blue stone without delay. He had sense enough remaining to explain for what purpose he required it, when the person applied to objected to furnish him with the poisonous article. The remedy, however, was ultimately procured, taken, and in a few hours he was recovered sufficiently to return home. He never found the symptoms return again to my recollection.

The chitcherah[9] (inverted thorn), is a shrub common to India, which bears small grains not unlike rice; these seeds are poisonous in their natural state, but when properly prepared with a portion of urzeez[10]—(tin), it becomes a useful medicine; and in particular cases of scrofula, which have resisted all other remedies offered by the medical practitioners, the Natives tell me this has proved an effectual remedy; and my informant, a Native doctor, assures me that three doses, of three grains each, is all he finds necessary to give his patient in scrofula cases.

The chitcherah in its green state is resorted to as a remedy for the sting of scorpions: when applied to the wound, which is often much inflamed and very painful, the cure is prompt. The scorpion runs from this shrub when held to it, as if it were frightened: many people declare scorpions are never met with in the grounds where the chitcherah grows.

The neam-tree[11] is cultivated near the houses of Natives generally, in the Upper Provinces, because, as they affirm, it is very conducive to health, to breathe the air through the neam-trees. This tree is not very quick of growth, but reaches a good size. When it has attained its full height, the branches spread out as luxuriantly as the oak and supplies an agreeable shelter from the sun. The bark is rough; the leaves long, narrow, curved, pointed, and with saw teeth edges; both the wood and leaves partake of the same disagreeable bitter flavour. The green leaves are used medicinally as a remedy for biles; after being pounded they are mixed with water and taken as a draught; they are also esteemed efficacious as poultices and fomentations for tumours, &c. The young twigs are preferred by all classes of the Natives for tooth-brushes.

The hurrundh,[12] or castor-tree, is cultivated by farmers in their corn-fields throughout Hindoostaun. This tree seldom exceeds in its growth the height of an English shrub. The bark is smooth; the leaf, in shape, resembles the sycamore, but of a darker green. The pods containing the seed grow in clusters like grapes, but of a very different appearance, the surface of each pod being rough, thorny, and of a dingy red cast when ripe. The seed produces the oil, which is in common use as a powerful medicine, for men and animals. In remote stations, where any difficulty exists in procuring cocoa-nut oil, the castor oil is often rendered useful for burning in lamps; the light, however, produced by it is very inferior to the oil of cocoa-nut. The green leaves are considered cooling to wounds or inflamed places, and therefore used with ointment after the blister-plaster is removed.

As I have seen this tree growing in corn-fields, I may here remark that the farmer's motives for cultivating it originate in the idea that his crops are benefited by a near vicinity to the hurrundh. It is also very common to observe a good row of the plant called

ulsee[13](linseed), bordering a plantation of wheat or barley: they fancy this herb preserves the blade healthy, and the corn from blight.

The umultass[14] (cassia) is a large and handsome forest tree, producing that most useful drug in long dark pods, several inches long, which hang from the branches in all directions, giving a most extraordinary appearance to the tree. The seed is small and mixed with the pulp, which dissolves in water, and is in general use with the Natives as a powerful and active medicine in bilious cases. I am not, however, aware that the seed possesses any medicinal property: it certainly is not appropriated to such cases in Hindoostaun.

Myrtle-trees,[15] under many different names, and of several kinds, are met with in India, of an immense size compared with those grown in Europe. They are cultivated for their known properties, rather than as mere ornaments to the garden. The leaves, boiled in water, are said to be of service to the hair; the root and branches are considered medicinal.

The pomegranate-tree[16] may be ranked amongst the choicest beauties of Asiatic horticulture; and when its benefits are understood, no one wonders that a tree or two is to be seen in almost every garden and compound of the Mussulmaun population in India.

The finest fruit of this sort is brought, however, from Persia and Cabul, at a great expense; and from the general estimation in which it is held, the merchants annually import the fruit in large quantities. There are two sorts, the sweet and the acid pomegranate, each possessing medicinal properties peculiar to itself. Sherbet is made from the juice, which is pressed out, and boiled up with sugar or honey to a syrup; thus prepared it keeps good for any length of time, and very few families omit making their yearly supply, as it constitutes a great luxury in health, and a real benefit in particular disorders. The Natives make many varieties of sherbet from the juices of their fruits, as the pine-apple, falsah,[17] mango, or any other of the same succulent nature, each having properties to recommend it beyond the mere pleasantness of its flavour.

An admirer of Nature must be struck with the singular beauty of the pomegranate-tree, so commonly cultivated in India. The leaves are of a rich dark green, very glossy, and adorned at the same time with every variety of bud, bloom, and fruit, in the several stages of vegetation, from the first bud to the ripe fruit in rich luxuriance, and this in succession nearly throughout the year. The bright scarlet colour of the buds and blossoms seldom vary in their shades; but contrasted with the glossy dark green foliage, the effect excites wonder and admiration. There is a medicinal benefit to be derived from every part of this tree from its root upwards, each part possessing a distinct property, which is employed according to the Native knowledge and practice of medicine.

Even the falling blossoms are carefully collected, and when made into a conserve, are administered successfully in cases of blood-spitting.

The tamarind-tree may often be discovered sheltering the tomb of revered or sainted characters; but I am not aware of any particular veneration entertained towards this tree by the general population of India, beyond the benefit derived from the medicinal properties of the fruit and the leaves.[18]

The ripe fruit, soaked in salt and water, to extract the juices, is strained, and administered as a useful aperient; and from its quality in cleansing the blood, many families prefer this fruit in their curries to other acids. From the tamarind-tree, preserves are made for the affluent, and chatnee for the poor, to season their coarse barley unleavened cakes, which form their daily meal, and with which they seem thoroughly contented.

From what cause I know not, but it is generally understood that vegetation does not thrive in the vicinity of the tamarind-tree. Indeed, I have frequently heard the Natives account for the tamarind being so often planted apart from other trees, because they fancy vegetation is always retarded in their vicinity.

The jahmun-tree[19] is also held in general estimation for the benefit of the fruit, which, when ripe, is eaten with salt, and esteemed a great luxury, and in every respect preferable to olives. The fruit, in its raw state, is a powerful astringent, and possesses many properties not generally known out of Native society, which may excuse my mentioning them here. The fruit, which is about the size and colour of the damson-plum, when ripe is very juicy, and makes an excellent wine, not inferior in quality to port. The Natives, however, are not permitted by their law to drink wine, and therefore this property in the fruit is of no benefit to them; but they encourage the practice of extracting the juice of jahmun for vinegar, which is believed to be the most powerful of all vegetable acids. The Native medical practitioners declare, that if by accident a hair has been introduced with food into the stomach, it can never digest of itself, and will produce both pain and nausea to the individual. On such occasions they administer jahmun vinegar, which has the property of dissolving any kind of hair, and the only thing they are aware of that will. Sherbet is made of this vinegar, and is often taken in water either immediately after dinner, or when digestion is tardy.

The skin of the jahmun produces a permanent dye of a bright lilac colour, and with the addition of urzeez (tin), a rich violet. The effect on wool I have never tried, but on silks and muslins the most beautiful shades have been produced by the simplest process possible, and so permanent, that the colour resisted every attempt to remove it by washing, &c.[20]

The mango-tree stands pre-eminently high in the estimation of the Natives, and this is not to be wondered at when the various benefits derived from it are brought under consideration. It is magnificent in its growth, and splendid in its foliage, and where a plantation of mango-trees, called 'a tope', is met with, that spot is preferred by travellers on which to pitch their tent. The season of blooming is about February and March; the aromatic scent from the flowers is delightful, and the beautiful clustering of the blossoms is not very unlike the horse-chestnut in appearance and size, but branching horizontally. The young mangoes are gathered for preserves and pickles before the stone is formed; the

full-grown unripe fruit is peeled, split, and dried, for seasoning curries, &c. The ripe fruit spoken of in a former Letter requires no further commendation, neither will it admit of comparison with any European fruits. The kernels, when ripe, are often dried and ground into flour for bread in seasons of scarcity. The wood is useful as timber for doors, rafters, &c., and the branches and leaves for fuel; in short, there is no part of the whole tree but is made useful in some way to man.

The sherrefah[21] (custard-apple) is produced on a very graceful tree, not, however, of any great size; the blossom nearly resembles that of the orange in colour and shape; the fruit ripens in the hottest months, and is similar in flavour to well-made custards. The skin is of a dusky pea-green rough surface, in regular compartments; each division or part containing a glossy black seed covered with the custard. This seed is of some utility amongst the lower order of Natives who have occasion to rid themselves of vermin at the expense of little labour; the seed is pounded fine and when mixed in the hair destroys the living plague almost instantly. The same article is often used with a hair-pencil to remove a cataract of the eye (they have no idea of surgical operations on the eye). There is one thing worthy of remark in this tree and its fruit, that flies are never known to settle on either; ants of every description feed on the fruit without injury, so that it cannot be imagined there is anything poisonous to insects, generally, in the quality of the fruit; yet, certain it is, the sherrefah is equally obnoxious to flies as the seed is destructive to vermin. The leaves and tender twigs are considered detrimental to health, if not actually poisonous to cattle.

The guaver,[23] white and red, are produced in the Upper Provinces; but the fruit is seldom so fine as in the Bengal district. The strong aromatic smell and flavour of this fruit is not agreeable to all tastes; in size and shape it resembles the quince.

The Damascus fig ripens well, and the fruit is superior to any I have met with in other countries. The indigenous fig-tree of Hindoostaun is one of the objects of Hindoo veneration. It has always been described to me by those Natives, as the sacred burbut,[24]—why? they could not explain. The fruit is very inferior.

The peach is cultivated in many varieties, and every new introduction repays the careful gardener's skill by a rich and beautiful produce. They have a flat peach,[24] with a small round kernel (a native of China), the flavour of which is delicious, and the tree prolific.

I may here remark, that all those trees we are accustomed in Europe to designate wall-fruit, are in India pruned for standards. The only fruit allowed to trail on frames is the vine, of which they have many choice varieties; one in particular, of late introduction from Persia, has the remarkable peculiarity of being seedless, called 'Ba daanah'[25] (without seeds); the fruit is purple, round, and sweet as honey.

Peach, nectarine, and apricot trees, are cut down early in February, much in the same way as willows are docked in England: the new wood grows rapidly, and the fruit is ready for the table in the month of June. A tree neglected to be pruned in this way annually, would

the first year yield but little, and that indifferent fruit, the tree become unhealthy, and, in most cases, never again restored to its former vigour.

Apple-trees are found chiefly in the gardens of Europeans; they are not perhaps as yet understood by Native gardeners, or it may be the climate is not favourable to them; certain it is, that the apples produced in Hindoostaun are not to be compared with those of other countries. Singular as it may seem, yet I have never met with more than one species of apple in my visits to the gardens of India. I have often fancied a fresh importation of English apple-trees would be worth the trouble of the transfer.[26]

The apple-trees grow tall and slender, the blossoms break out on the top of each branch in a cluster; the fruit, when ripe, is about the size of small crabs, and shaped like golden-pippins, without any acidity, but the sweetness rather resembles turnips than the well-flavoured apple. In the bazaars are to be met with what is called apple-preserve, which, however, is often a deception,—turnips substituted for apples.

Mulberries are indigenous, and of several varieties. The Native gardeners, however, take so little pains to assist or improve the operations of Nature, that the mulberry here is seldom so fine as in other countries. The common sort is produced on an immense tree with small leaves; the berry is long, and when ripe, of a yellow-green, very much resembling caterpillars in colour and form.

Plum-trees would thrive in Hindoostaun if introduced and cultivated,[27] since the few, chiefly the bullace-plum, I have seen, produce tolerably good fruit.

Cherries, I have never observed; they are known, however, by the name of 'glass'[28] to the travelling Natives, who describe them as common to Cashmire, Cabul, and Persia.

Gooseberries and currants are not known in India, but they have many good substitutes in the falsah, American sorrel, puppayah,[29] and a great variety of Chinese fruits—all of which make excellent tarts, preserves, and jellies. Strawberries and raspberries repay their cultivation in the Upper Provinces: they thrive well with proper care and attention.

The melon I have described elsewhere as an indigenous fruit greatly valued by the Natives, who cultivate the plant in the open fields without much trouble, and with very little expense; the varieties are countless, and every year adds to the number amongst the curious, who pride themselves on novelty in this article of general estimation.

The pine-apple requires very little pains to produce, and little demand on art in bringing it to perfection. The Bengal climate, however, suits it better than the dry soil of the Upper Provinces. I have frequently heard a superstitious objection urged by the Natives against this fruit being planted in their regular gardens; they fancy prosperity is checked by its introduction, or to use their own words,—'It is unfortunate to the proprietor of the garden.'

There is a beautiful shrub, called by the Natives, mahdhaar, or arg,[30]—literally, fire-plant,—met with in the Upper Provinces of India, inhabiting every wild spot where the soil is sandy, as generally as the thistle on neglected grounds in England.

The mahdhaar-plant seldom exceeds four feet in height, the branches spread out widely, the leaves are thick, round, and broad; the blossom resembles our dark auricula. When the seed is ripe, the pod presents a real treat to the lover of Nature. The mahdhaar pod may be designated a vegetable bag of pure white silk, about the size of large walnuts. The skin or bag being removed, flat seeds are discovered in layers over each other, resembling scales of fish; to each seed is affixed very fine white silk, about two inches long; this silk is defended from the air by the seed; the texture greatly resembles the silky hair of the Cashmire goat. I once had the mahdhaar silk collected, spun, and wove, merely as an experiment, which answered my full expectation: the article thus produced might readily be mistaken for the shawl stuff of Cashmire.[31]

The stalks of mahdhaar, when broken, pour out a milky juice at all seasons of the year, which falling on the skin produces blisters. The Natives bring this juice into use both for medicine and alchymy in a variety of ways.

The mahdhaar, as a remedy for asthma, is in great repute with the Natives; it is prepared in the following way:—The plants are collected, root, stalks, and leaves, and well dried by exposure to the sun; they are then burnt on iron plates, and the ashes thrown into a pan of water, where they remain for some days, until the water has imbibed the saline particles; it is then boiled in an iron vessel, until the moisture is entirely absorbed, and the salt only left at the bottom. The salt is administered in half-grain doses at the first, and increasing the quantity when the patient has become accustomed to its influence: it would be dangerous to add to the quantity suddenly.[32]

Another efficient remedy, both for asthma and obstinate continuance of a cough, is found in the salt extracted from tobacco-leaves, by a similar process, which is administered with the like precaution, and in the same quantities.

The sirrakee and sainturh[33] are two specimens of one genus of jungle-grass, the roots of which are called secundah,[34] or khus-khus,[35] and are collected on account of their aromatic smell, to form thatch tatties, or screens for the doors and windows; which being kept constantly watered, the strong wind rushing through the wet khus-khus is rendered agreeably cool, and produces a real luxury at the season of the hot winds, when every puff resembles a furnace-heat to those exposed to it by out-of-door occupation.

This grass presents so many proofs of the beneficent care of Divine Providence to the creatures of His hand, that the heart must be ungratefully cold which neglects praise and thanksgiving to the Creator, whose power and mercy bestows so great a benefit. The same might be justly urged against our insensibility, if the meanest herb or weed could speak to our hearts, each possessing, as it surely does, in its nature a beneficial property peculiar to itself. But here the blessing is brought home to every considerate mind, since a substitute for this article does not appear to exist in India.

I have seen the sainturh stalks, on which the bloom gracefully moves as feathers, sixteen feet high. The sirrakee has a more delicate blossom, finer stalk, and seldom, I believe, exceeds ten feet; the stalk resembles a reed, full of pith, without a single joint from the shoot upwards; the colour is that of clean wheat straw, but even more glossy. The blossom is of a silky nature possessing every variety of shade, from pure white to the rainbow's tints, as viewed in the distance at sunrise; and when plucked the separated blossoms have many varieties of hue from brown and yellow, to purple.

The head or blossom is too light to weigh down the firm but flexible stalk; but as the wind presses against each patch of grass, it is moved in a mass, and returns to its erect position with a dignity and grace not to be described.

I have watched for the approaching season of the blooming sirrakee with an anxiety almost childish; my attention never tired with observing the progressive advances from the first show of blossom, to the period of its arriving at full perfection; at which time, the rude sickle of the industrious labourer levels the majestic grass to the earth for domestic purposes. The benefits it then produces would take me very long to describe.

The sirrakee and sainturh are stripped from the outward sheltering blades, and wove together at the ends; in this way they are used for bordering tatties, or thatched roofs; sometimes they are formed into screens for doors, others line their mud-huts with them. They are found useful in constructing accommodations after the manner of bulk-heads on boats for the river voyagers, and make a good covering for loaded waggons. For most of these purposes the article is well suited, as it resists moisture and swells as the wet falls on it, so that the heaviest rain may descend on a frame of sirrakee without one drop penetrating, if it be properly placed in a slanting position.

I cannot afford space to enumerate here the variety of purposes which this production of Nature is both adapted for and appropriated to; every part of the grass being carefully stored by the thrifty husbandman, even to the tops of the reed, which, when the blossom is rubbed off, is rendered serviceable, and proves an excellent substitute for that useful invention, a birch-broom. The coarse parent grass, which shelters the sirrakee, is the only article yet found to answer the purposes for thatching the bungalows of the rich, the huts of the poor, the sheds for cattle, and roofs for boats. The religious devotee sets up a chupha-hut,[36] without expense,—(all the house he requires,)—on any waste spot of land most convenient to himself, away from the busy haunts of the tumultuous world, since bamboo and grass are the common property of all who choose to take the trouble of gathering it from the wilderness. And here neither rent or taxes are levied on the inhabitant, who thus appropriates to himself a home from the bounteous provision prepared by Divine goodness for the children of Nature.

This grass is spontaneous in its growth, neither receiving or requiring aid from human cultivation. It is found in every waste throughout Hindoostaun, and is the prominent feature of the jungle, into which the wild animals usually resort for shelter from the heat of the day, or make their covert when pursued by man, their natural enemy.

The beneficence of Heaven has also exacted but little labour from the husbandman of India in procuring his daily provision. Indeed the actual wants of the lower order of Natives are few, compared with those of the same class in England; exertion has not, therefore, been called forth by necessity in a climate which induces habits of indulgence, ease, and quiet; where, however it may have surprised me at first, that I found not one single Native disposed to delight in the neat ordering of a flower-garden, I have since ascertained it is from their unwillingness to labour without a stronger motive than the mere gratification of taste.[37] Hence the uncultivated ground surrounding the cottages in India, which must naturally strike the mind of strangers with mingled feelings of pity and regret, when comparing the cottages of the English peasantry with those of the same classes of people in Hindoostaun.

The bamboo presents to the admirer of Nature no common specimen of her beautiful productions; and to the contemplating mind a wide field for wonder, praise, and gratitude. The graceful movements of a whole forest of these slender trees surpass all description; they must be witnessed in their uncultivated ground, as I have seen them, to be thoroughly understood or appreciated, for I do not recollect wood scenery in any other place that could convey the idea of a forest of bamboo.

The bamboos are seen in clusters, striking from the parent root by suckers, perhaps from fifty to a hundred in a patch, of all sizes; the tallest in many instances exceed sixty feet, with slender branches, and leaves in pairs, which are long, narrow, and pointed. The body of each bamboo is hollow and jointed, in a similar way to wheat stalks, with bands or knots, by which wonderful contrivance both are rendered strong and flexible, suited to the several designs of creative Wisdom. The bamboo imperceptibly tapers from the earth upwards. It is the variety of sizes in each cluster, however, which gives grace and beauty to the whole as they move with every breath of air, or are swayed by the strong wind.

Where space allows the experiment, the tallest bamboo may be brought down to a level with the earth, without snapping asunder. In the strong tempest the supple bamboo may be seen to bow submissively,—as the self-subdued and pliant mind in affliction,—and again rear its head uninjured by the storm, as the righteous man 'preserved by faith' revives after each trial, or temptation.

The wood of the bamboo is hard, yet light, and possesses a fine grain, though fibrous. The outward surface is smooth and highly polished by Nature, and the knot very difficult to penetrate by any other means than a saw. The twigs or branches are covered with sharp thorns, in all probability a natural provision to defend the young trees from herbaceous animals. I have heard of the bamboo blossoming when arrived at full age; this I have, however, never seen, and cannot therefore presume to describe.[38]

In the hollow divisions of the bamboo is found, in small quantities, a pure white tasteless substance, called tawurshear,[39] which as a medicine is in great request with the Native doctors, who administer it as a sovereign remedy for lowness of spirits, and every disease of the heart, such as palpitations, &c. The tawurshear when used medicinally is pounded fine, and mixed up with gold and silver leaf, preserved quinces and apples, and the syrup

of pomegranates, which is simmered over a slow fire until it becomes of the consistence of jam. It is taken before meals by the patient.

The bamboo is rendered serviceable to man in a countless variety of ways, both for use and ornament. The chuphas (thatched-roofs) of huts, cottages, or bungalows, are all constructed on frames of bamboo, to which each layer of grass is firmly fixed by laths formed of the same wood.

The only doors in poor people's habitations are contrived from the same materials as the roof: viz., grass on bamboo frames, just sufficient to secure privacy and defend the inmates from cold air, or the nightly incursions of wolves and jackals. For the warm weather, screens are invented of split bamboos, either fine or coarse, as circumstances permit, to answer the purpose of doors, both for the rich and poor, whenever the house is so situated that these intruders may be anticipated at night.

The bamboo is made useful also in the kitchen as bellows by the aid of the cook's breath; in the stable, to administer medicine to horses; and to the poor traveller, as a deposit for his oil, either for cooking or his lamp. To the boatman as sculls, masts, yards, and poles; besides affording him a covering to his boat, which could not be constructed with any other wood equally answering the same varied purpose of durability and lightness.

The carriers (generally of the bearer caste), by the help of a split bamboo over the shoulder, convey heavy loads suspended by cords at each end, from one part of India to the other, many hundred miles distant. No other wood could answer this purpose so well; the bamboo being remarkably light and of a very pliant nature lessens the fatigue to the bearer, whilst almost any wood sufficiently strong to bear the packages would fret the man's shoulder and add burden to burden. The bearers do not like to carry more than twelve seer (twenty-four pounds) slung by ropes at each end of their bamboo for any great distance; but, I fear, they are not always allowed the privilege of thinking for themselves in these matters.

When a hackery[40] (sort of waggon) is about to be loaded with of corn or goods, a railing is formed by means of bamboos to admit the luggage; thus rendering the waggon itself much lighter than if built of solid wood, an object of some moment, when considering the smallness of the cattle used for draught, oxen of a small breed being in general use for waggons, carts, ploughs, &c. I have never seen horses harnessed to any vehicle in India, except to such gentlemen's carriages as are built on the English principle.

The Native carriages of ladies and travellers are indebted to the bamboo for all the wood used in the construction of the body, which is merely a frame covered with cloth, shaped in several different ways,—some square, others double cones, &c.

Baskets of every shape and size, coarse or fine, are made of the split bamboo; covers for dinner trays, on which the food is sent from the kitchen to the hall; cheese-presses, punkahs, and screens, ingeniously contrived in great varieties; netting-needles and pins,

latches and bolts for doors; skewers and spits; umbrella sticks, and walking canes; toys in countless ways, and frames for needle-work.

A long line of etceteras might here be added as to the number of good purposes to which the bamboo is adapted and appropriated in Native economy; I must not omit that even the writing-paper on which I first practised the Persian character was manufactured from the bamboo, which is esteemed more durable, but not so smooth as their paper made from cotton. The young shoots of bamboo are both pickled and preserved by the Natives, and esteemed a great luxury when produced at meals with savoury pillaus, &c.

I am told, a whole forest of bamboo has sometimes been consumed by fire, ignited by their own friction in a heavy storm, and the blaze fanned by the opposing wind; the devouring element, under such circumstances, could be stayed only when there ceased to be a tree to feed the flame.

[1] The Indian rose-water is made principally from *Rosa damascena* about Ghazipur in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. It has no medicinal value, but is used as a vehicle for other mixtures (Watt, *Economic Dictionary*, VI, part i. 560 ff.).

[2] *Bibi Sahiba*. 'On the principle of the degradation of titles which is general, this word in application to European ladies has been superseded by the hybrid *Mem Sahib* or Madam Sahib, though it is often applied to European maid-servants or other Englishwomen of that rank of life' (Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*[2], 78).

[3] It is one of the flowers which produce pollen catarrh. Pope's suggestion that a man with a hypersensitive nervous system might 'die of a rose in aromatic pain', is not an impossible contingency.

[4] Goulard water, named after Thomas Goulard, a French surgeon: a solution of sub-acetate of lead, used as a lotion in cases of inflammation (*New English Dictionary, s.v.*).

[5] P. 235.

[6] Not in Platts' *Hindustani Dictionary*: probably *barhan*, increasing.

[7] *Ritha*, the berry of the soap-nut tree, *Sapindus trifoliatus* or *mukorossi*. (Watt, *Economic Dict*., vol. vi, part ii, 468.)

[8] *Nila tutiya*, copper sulphate: used as an emetic in cases of poisoning, but not now recognized as a remedy for snake-bite.

[9] *Chichra, Achryanthes aspera* (Watt, i. 81).

[10] *Arziz*.

[11] *Nim, Melia Azadirachta*. The belief that it is a prophylactic against fever and cholera is held even by some Europeans (Watt, v. 217).

[12] *Arand, Ricinus communis*.

[13] Alsi, *Linum usitatissimum.*

[14] *Amaltas, Cassia fistula*. The pulp of the fruit and the root-bark form the most useful domestic medicine, a simple purgative.

[15] *Myrtus communis*.

[16] *Punica Granatum*. The best varieties of the fruit come from Afghanistan and Persia.

[17] *Phalsa, falsa, Grewia asiatica*.

[18] The shade of the tree is supposed to be unhealthy to men, animals, and plants, as it is believed to be haunted by spirits, and it is worshipped on a day known as 'Tamarind Eleventh'.

[19] See p. 194.

[20] Watt, however, writes: 'Tin is a highly important metal in dyeing as practised in Europe, but in this respect is apparently unknown to the natives of India.' (Watt, *Economic Dictionary*, vol. vi, part iv, 60.)

[21] *Sharifa, Anona squamosa*.

[22] Guava.

[23] *Bargat*, the banyan-tree.

[24] *Pyrus persica*.

[25] *Be-danah.*

[26] Excellent apples are now grown on the lower Himalayas.

[27] *Prunus communis* grows in the lower Himalayas and as far down as Saharanpur, but the fruit is inferior.

[28] The sweet or wild cherry, *Prunus avium*, is called *gilas* in the Hills.

[29] *Papaiya*, the papau tree, *Carica papaya*, has the curious property of making meat tender, if placed near it.

[30] *Madar, ak.* The latter term is derived from Sanskrit *arka*, 'the sun', on account of the fiery colour of its flowers.

[31] The plant yields a silk cotton from the seeds and a rich white bass fibre from the bark, both likely to be of commercial value (Watt, ii. 38 ff.)

[32] Used in equal proportions with black pepper, the fresh blossoms are a useful and cheap remedy for asthma, hysteria, and epilepsy (*ibid*. ii. 44 ff).

[33] *Sirki* is the upper portion of the blossoming stem, and *sentha* the lower portion of the reed grass *Saccharum ciliare* (*ibid*. vi, part ii, 2.)

[34] *Sarkanda* is the Panjab name for the grass *Saccharum arundinaceum*, but it is also applied to *Saccharum ciliare* in last note (*ibid*. vi, part ii, 1 f.).

[35] *Khaskhas*, used for screens, is the root of the grass *Andropogon muricatus* (*ibid*. i, 245 ff.)

[36] *Chhappar*.

[37] This is true of the higher class Musalmans; but there were splendid gardens in the palaces of the Moghul Emperors: see C.M. Villiers Stuart, *The Gardens of the Great Mughals*, 1913.

[38] The subject of the flowering of the bamboo has been investigated by Sir G. Watt, who writes: 'A bamboo may not flower before it has attained a certain age, but its blossoming is not fixed so arbitrarily that it cannot be retarded or accelerated by climatic influences. It is an undoubted fact that the flowering of the bamboo is decided by causes which bring about famine, for the providential supply of food from this source has saved the lives of thousands of persons during several of the great famines of India.' Hence the provision of the edible seeds by the extension of bamboo cultivation has been recommended as a means of mitigating distress (*Economic Dictionary*, vol. i, 373 ff., 386).

[39] *Tabashir*, bamboo manna, is a siliceous substance found in the joints of the bamboo: considered cooling, toxic, aphrodisiac and pectoral, but as a medicinal agent it is inert (*ibid*. i. 384, Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*[2], 887).

[40] A bullock carriage, Hindustani *chhakra* (Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*[2], 407 f.).

LETTER XXII

Monkeys.—Hindoo opinions of their Nature.—Instances of their sagacity.—Rooted animosity of the Monkey tribe to the snake.—Cruelty to each other when maimed.—The female remarkable for affection to its young.—Anecdotes descriptive of the belief of the Natives in the Monkey being endowed with reason.—The Monkeys and the Alligator.—The Traveller and the Monkeys.—The Hindoo and the Monkey.

The Natives of India, more particularly the Hindoos, are accustomed to pay particular attention to the habits of the varied monkey race, conceiving them to be connecting links in the order of Nature between brutes and rational creatures; or, as some imagine and assert, (without any other foundation than conjecture and fancy), that they were originally a race of human beings, who for their wicked deeds have been doomed to perpetuate their disgrace and punishment to the end of time in the form and manner we see them, inhabiting forests, and separated from their superior man.

I have had very few opportunities of acquainting myself with the general principles of the Hindoo belief, but I am told, there are amongst them those who assert that one of their deities was transformed to a particular kind of monkey, since designated Hummoomaun,[1] after the object of their adoration; whence arises the marked veneration paid by Hindoos of certain sects to this class of monkeys.

The Natives firmly believe the whole monkey race to be gifted with reason to a certain extent, never accounting for the sagacity and cunning they are known to possess by instinctive habits; arguing from their own observations, that the monkeys are peaceable neighbours, or inveterate enemies to man, in proportion as their good will is cultivated by kindness and hospitality, or their propensity to revenge roused by an opposite line of conduct towards them.

The husbandman, whose land is in the vicinity of a forest, and the abode of monkeys, secures safety to his crops, by planting a patch of ground with that species of grain which these animals are known to prefer. Here they assemble, as appetite calls, and feast themselves upon their own allotment; and, as if they appreciated the hospitality of the landlord, not a blade is broken, or a seed destroyed in the fields of corn to the right and left of their plantation. But woe to the farmer who neglects this provision; his fields will not only be visited by the marauders, but their vengeance will be displayed in the wasteful destruction of his cultivation. This undoubtedly looks more like reason than instinct; and if credit could be given to half the extraordinary tales that are told of them, the monkeys of India might justly be entitled to a higher claim than that of instinct for their actions.

Monkeys seem to be aware that snakes are their natural enemies. They never advance in pursuit of, yet they rarely run from a snake; unless its size renders it too formidable an object for their strength and courage to attack with anything like a prospect of success in

destroying it. So great is the animosity of the monkey race to these reptiles, that they attack them systematically, after the following manner:—

When a snake is observed by a monkey, he depends on his remarkable agility as a safeguard from the enemy. At the most favourable opportunity he seizes the reptile just below the head with a firm grasp, then springs to a tree, if available, or to any hard substance near at hand, on which he rubs the snake's head with all his strength until life is extinct; at intervals smelling the fresh blood as it oozes from the wounds of his victim. When success has crowned his labour, the monkey capers about his prostrate enemy, as if in triumph at the victory he has won; developing, as the Natives say, in this, a striking resemblance to man.

Very few monkeys, in their wild state, ever recover from inflicted wounds; the reason assigned by those who have studied their usual habits is, that whenever a poor monkey has been wounded, even in the most trifling way, his associates visit him by turns, when each visitor, without a single exception, is observed to scratch the wound smartly with their nails. A wound left to itself might be expected to heal in a short time, but thus irritated by a successive application of their sharp nails, it inflames and increases. Mortification is early induced by the heated atmosphere, and death rapidly follows.

The monkeys' motives for adding to their neighbour's anguish, is accounted for by some speculators on the score of their aversion to the unnatural smell of blood; or they are supposed to be actuated by a natural abhorrence to the appearance of the wound, not by any means against the wounded; since in their domestic habits, they are considered to be peaceable and affectionate in their bearings towards each other. The strong will exercise mastery over the weak where food is scarce, but, in a general way, they are by no means quarrelsome or revengeful amongst themselves. They are known to hold by each other in defending rights and privileges, if the accounts given by credible Natives be true, who add that a whole colony of monkeys have been known to issue forth in a body to revenge an injury sustained by an individual of their tribe; often firing a whole village of chupha-roofs, where the aggressor is known to be a resident, who in his anger may have maimed or chastised one of their colony.

The female monkey is remarkable for her attachment to her progeny, which she suckles until it is able to procure food for its own sustenance. When one of her young dies, the mother is observed to keep it closely encircled in her arms, moaning piteously with true maternal feelings of regret, and never parting with it from her embrace until the dead body becomes an offensive mass: and when at last she quits her hold, she lays it on the ground before her, at no great distance, watching with intense anxiety the dead body before her, which she can no longer fold in her embrace, until the work of decomposing has altered the form of the creature that claimed her tender attachment. What an example is here given to unnatural mothers who neglect or forsake their offspring!

I shall here insert a few anecdotes illustrative of the opinions of the Natives on the subject of monkeys being possessed of reasoning faculties. They shall be given exactly as I have received them, not expecting my readers will give to them more credit than I am disposed

to yield to most of these tales; but as they are really believed to be true by the Natives who relate them, I feel bound to afford them a place in my work, which is intended rather to describe men as they are, than men as I wish to see them.

In the neighbourhood of Muttra is an immense jungle or forest, where monkeys abound in great numbers and variety. Near a village bordering this forest, is a large natural lake which is said to abound with every sort of fish and alligators. On the banks of this lake are many trees, some of which branch out a great distance over the water. On these trees monkeys of a large description, called Lungoor,[2] gambol from spray to spray in happy amusement: sometimes they crowd in numbers on one branch, by which means their weight nearly brings the end of the bough to the surface of the water; on which occasion it is by no means unusual for one or more of their number to be lessened.

Whether the monkeys told their thoughts or not, my informant did not say, but the retailers of this story assert, that the oldest monkey was aware that his missing brethren had been seized by an alligator from the branch of the tree, whilst they were enjoying their amusement. This old monkey, it would seem, resolved on revenging the injury done to his tribe, and formed a plan for retaliating on the common enemy of his race.

The monkeys were observed by the villagers, for many successive days, actively occupied in collecting the fibrous bark of certain trees, which they were converting into a thick rope. The novelty of this employment surprised the peasants and induced them to watch daily for the result. When the rope was completed, from sixty to seventy of the strongest monkeys conveyed it to the tree: having formed a noose at one end with the nicest care, the other end was secured by them to the overhanging arm of the tree. This ready, they commenced their former gambols, jumping about and crowding on the same branch which had been so fatal to many of their brethren.

The alligator, unconscious of the stratagem thus prepared to secure him, sprang from the water as the branch descended but instead of catching the monkey he expected, he was himself caught in the noose; and the monkeys moving away rather precipitately, the alligator was drawn considerably above the surface of the water. The more he struggled the firmer he was held by the noose; and here was his skeleton to be seen many years after, suspended from the tree over the water, until time and the changes of season released the blanched bones from their exalted situation, to consign them to their more natural element in the lake below.

On one occasion, a Hindoo traveller on his way to Muttra, from his place of residence, drew down the resentment of the monkeys inhabiting the same forest, by his inattention to their well-known habits. The story is told as follows:—

'The man was travelling with all his worldly wealth about his person: viz., fifty gold mohurs, (each nearly equal to two pounds in value[3]), and a few rupees, the savings of many a year's hard service, which were secreted in the folds of his turban; a good suit of clothes on his back; a few gold ornaments on his neck and arms; and a bundle of sundries and cooking vessels.

'The Hindoo was on foot, without companions, making his way towards the home of his forefathers, where he hoped with his little treasury to be able to spend his remaining years in peace with his family and friends, after many years' toil and absence from his home. He stopped near to the lake in question, after a long and fatiguing march, to rest himself beneath the shade of the trees, and cook his humble meal of bread and dhall. I ought here, perhaps, to say, that this class of Natives always cook in the open air, and, if possible, near a river, or large body of water, for the purpose of bathing before meals, and having water for purifying their cooking utensils, &c.

'The man having undressed himself, and carefully piled his wardrobe beneath the tree he had selected for shelter, went to the lake and bathed; after which he prepared his bread, and sat himself down to dine. As soon as he was comfortably seated, several large monkeys advanced and squatted themselves at a respectful distance from him, doubtless expecting to share in the good things he was enjoying. But, no: the traveller was either too hungry or inhospitable, for he finished his meal, without tendering the smallest portion to his uninvited visitors, who kept their station watching every mouthful until he had finished.

'The meal concluded, the traveller gathered his cooking vessels together and went to the bank of the lake, in order to wash them, as is customary, and to cleanse his mouth after eating; his clothes and valuables were left securely under the tree as he imagined,—if he thought at all about them,—for he never dreamed of having offended the monkeys by eating all he had cooked, without making them partakers. He was no sooner gone, however, than the monkeys assembled round his valuables; each took something from the collection; the oldest among them having secured the purse of gold, away they ran to the tree over the very spot where the man was engaged in polishing his brass vessels.

The Hindoo had soon completed his business at the lake, and unconscious of their movements, he had returned to the tree, where to his surprise and sorrow, he discovered his loss. Nearly frantic, the Hindoo doubted not some sly thief had watched his motions and removed his treasures, when he heard certain horrid yells from the monkeys which attracted his attention: he returned hastily to the lake, and on looking up to the tree, he discovered his enemies in the monkeys. They tantalized him for some time by holding up the several articles to his view, and when the old monkey shook the bag of gold, the poor man was in an agony; they then threw the whole into the lake, the coins, one by one, were cast into the deep water, where not a shadow of hope could be entertained of their restoration, as the lake was deep and known to be infested with alligators.

'The man was almost driven mad by this unlooked-for calamity, by which he was deprived of the many comforts his nursed treasure had so fairly promised him for the remainder of life. He could devise no plan for recovering his lost valuables, and resolved on hastening to the nearest village, there to seek advice and assistance from his fellow-men; where having related his unfortunate adventures, and declaring he had done nothing to anger the creatures, he was asked if he had dined, and if so, had he given them a share? He said, he had indeed cooked his dinner, and observed the monkeys seated before him whilst he dined, but he did not offer them any.

'"That, that, is your offence!" cried the villagers in a breath; "who would ever think of eating without sharing his meal with men or with animals? You are punished for your greediness, friend."—"Be it so," said the traveller; "I am severely used by the brutes, and am now resolved on punishing them effectually in return for the ill they have done me."

'He accordingly sold the gold ornaments from his arms and neck, purchased a quantity of sugar, ghee, flour, and arsenic, returned to his old quarters, prepared everything for cooking, and, in a short time, had a large dish filled with rich-looking cakes, to tempt his enemies to their own ruin.

'The feast was prepared in the presence of the assembled multitude of monkeys. The Hindoo placed the dish before his guests, saying, "There, my lords! your food is ready!" The old monkey advanced towards the dish, took up a cake, raised it to his nose, and then returning it to the dish, immediately ran off, followed by the whole of his associates into the thick jungle.

'The man began to despair, and thought himself the most unlucky creature existing; when, at length, he saw them returning with augmented numbers; he watched them narrowly, and observed each monkey had a green leaf in his paw, in which he folded a cake and devoured the whole speedily. The man expected of course to see them sicken immediately, for the quantity of arsenic he had used was sufficient, he imagined to have killed twenty times their number. But, no: his stratagem entirely failed; for the leaf they had provided themselves was an antidote to the poison put into their food. The traveller thus sacrificed even that little which would have carried him on his journey, had he been satisfied with his first loss; but the Hindoo cherished a revengeful disposition, and thereby was obliged to beg his way to his family.'

The next monkey story is equally marvellous, the Natives believe that it actually occurred; I am disposed, however, to think all these stories were originally fables to impress a moral upon the ignorant.

'Near a small town in the province of Oude there is a jungle of some extent, inhabited by monkeys. A certain man of the Hindoo class, residing in the town, resolved upon enjoying himself one day with a bottle of arrack he had procured by stealth, and since it is well known that spirits or fermented liquors are prohibited articles in the territories governed by Mussulmaun rulers, the man betook himself with his treat to the neighbouring jungle, where in private he might drink the spirit he loved, and escape the vigilance of the police.

'Arriving at a convenient spot, the Hindoo seated himself under a tree, prepared his hookha, drew from his wrapper the bottle of spirits, and a small cup he had provided; and if ever he knew what happiness was in his life, this moment was surely his happiest.

'He drank a cup of his liquor, smoked his hookha with increased relish, and thought of nothing but his present enjoyment. Presently he heard the sound of rustling in the trees,

and in a few minutes after, a fine sturdy monkey, of the Lungoor tribe, placed himself very near to him and his bottle.

'The Hindoo was of a lively temper, and withal kindly disposed towards the living, though not of his own species. Having a cake of dry bread in his waistband, he broke off a piece and threw it to his visitor; the monkey took the bread and sniffed at the cup. "Perhaps you may like to taste as well as to smell," thought the Hindoo, as he poured out the liquor into the cup, and presented it to his guest.

'The monkey raised the cup with both paws to his mouth, sipped of its contents, winked his eyes, appeared well satisfied with the flavour, and to the surprise of the Hindoo, finished the cup, which was no sooner done, than away he sprang up the tree again.

'"Had I known you would run away so soon, my guest, I should have spared my arrack;" thought the Hindoo. But the monkey quickly returned to his old position, threw down a gold mohur to his entertainer, and sat grinning with apparent satisfaction. The Hindoo, astonished at the sight of gold, thought to repay his benefactor by another cup of spirits, which he placed before the monkey, who drank it off, and again mounted the tree, and shortly returned with a second gold mohur.

'Delighted with the profit his arrack produced, the Hindoo drank sparingly himself, for each time the monkey took a cup, a gold mohur was produced, until the man counted eight of these valuable coins on his palm. By this time, however, the monkey was completely overcome by the strength of his potations, and lay apparently senseless before the Hindoo, who fancied now was his turn to mount the tree, where he found, on diligent search, in a hollow place, a small bag of gold mohurs, with which he walked off, leaving the monkey prostrate on the earth.

'The Hindoo determined on going some distance from his home, in a different direction, fearing his secret treasure might be the means of drawing him into difficulties amongst the people of his own town, who had probably been robbed by the monkey at some previous period.

'In the meanwhile the monkey is supposed to have recovered from his stupor, and the next morning on discovering his loss, he set up a horrid yell, which brought together all his fellow-inhabitants of the jungle; and some neighbouring villagers saw an immense number of monkeys of all sorts and sizes, collected together in a body. The story runs that this army of monkeys was headed by the one who had recovered from his drunken fit, and that they marched away from the jungle in pursuit of the robber.

'Their first march was to the adjacent village, where every house was visited in turn by the monkeys, without success; no one ever venturing to obstruct or drive away the intruders, fearing their resentment. After which they sallied out of the village to the main road, minutely looking for footsteps, as a clue, on the sandy pathway; and by this means discovering the track of the Hindoo, they pursued the road they had entered throughout the day and night. Early in the morning of the following day, the monkeys advanced to

the serai (inn, or halting place for travellers) soon after the Hindoo himself had quitted it, who had actually sojourned there the previous night.

'On the road, when the horde of monkeys met any traveller, he was detained by them until the chief of them had scrutinized his features, and he was then liberated on finding he was not the person they were in pursuit of. After having marched nearly forty miles from their home, they entered one of the halting places for travellers, where the Hindoo was resting after his day's journey.

'The monkey having recognized the robber, immediately grasped him by the arm, and others entering, the frightened robber was searched, the purse discovered in his wrapper, which the chief monkey angrily seized, and then counted over its contents, piece by piece. This done, finding the number correct, the monkey selected eight pieces, and threw them towards the Hindoo; and distributing the remaining number of gold mohurs amongst the monkeys, who placed each his coin in the hollow of his cheek, the whole body retired from the serai to retrace their steps to the jungle.'

[1] Hanuman, the divine monkey of the Ramayana epic, who helped Rama to recover his abducted wife, Sita.

[2] *Langur, Semnopithecus entellus*.

[3] Now worth a little more than a sovereign.

LETTER XXIII

The Soofies.—Opinion of the Mussulmauns concerning Solomon.—The Ood-ood.—Description of the Soofies and their sect.—Regarded with great reverence.—Their protracted fasts.—Their opinion esteemed by the Natives.—Instance of the truth of their predictions.—The Saalik and Majoob Soofies.—The poets Haafiz and Saadie.—Character and attainments of Saadie.—His 'Goolistaun'.—Anecdotes descriptive of the origin of that work.—Farther remarks on the character and history of Saadie.—Interesting anecdotes illustrative of his virtues and the distinguishing characteristics of the Soofies.

The life of King Solomon, with all his acts, is the subject of many an author's pen, both in the Arabic and Persian languages; consequently the learned Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun are intimately acquainted with his virtues, his talent, and the favour with which he was visited by the great goodness of the Almighty. In the course of my sojourn amongst them, I have heard many remarkable and some interesting anecdotes relating to Solomon, which the learned men assure me are drawn from sources of unquestionable authority.

They affirm that the wisdom of Solomon not only enabled him to search into the most hidden thoughts of men, and to hold converse with them in their respective languages, but that the gift extended even to the whole brute creation; by which means he could hold unlimited converse, not only with the animate, as birds, beasts, and fish, but with inanimate objects, as shrubs, trees, and, indeed, the whole tribe of vegetable nature; and, further, that he was permitted to discern and control aerial spirits, as demons, genii, &c.

The pretty bird, known in India by the name of Ood-ood,[1] is much regarded by the Mussulmauns, as by their tradition this bird was the hurkaarah of King Solomon; and entrusted with his most important commissions whenever he required intelligence to be conveyed to or from a far distant place, because he could place greater confidence in the veracity of this bird, and rely on more certain dispatch, than when entrusting his commands to the most worthy of his men servants.

The ood-ood is beautifully formed, has a variegated plumage of black, yellow, and white, with a high tuft of feathers on its head, through which is a spear of long feathers protruding directly across the head for several inches, and is of the woodpecker species. The princes, Nuwaubs, and nobility of Hindoostaun, keep hurkaarahs for the purpose of conveying and obtaining intelligence, who are distinguished by a short spear, with a tuft of silk or worsted about the middle of the handle, and the tail of the ood-ood in the front of their turban, to remind them of this bird, which they are expected to imitate both in dispatch and fidelity. I am told, these men (from their early training) are enabled to run from fifty to sixty miles bare-footed, and return the same distance without halting on the same day.

The religious devotees of the Mussulmaun persuasion, who are denominated Soofies,[1] are conjectured, by many, to have a similar gift with Solomon of understanding the thoughts of other men. By some it is imagined that Solomon was the first Soofie; by others, that Ali, the husband of Fatima, imparted the knowledge of that mystery which constitutes the real Soofie. I am acquainted with some Natives who designate the Soofies 'Freemasons' but I imagine this to be rather on account of both possessing a secret, than for any similarity in other respects, between the two orders of people.

My business, however, is to describe. The Soofies then are, as far as I can comprehend, strictly religious men, who have forsaken entirely all attachment to earthly things, in their adoration of the one supreme God. They are sometimes found dwelling in the midst of a populous city, yet, even there they are wholly detached from the world, in heart, soul, and mind, exercising themselves in constant adoration of, and application to God; occasionally shutting themselves up for several weeks together in a hut of mud, thatched with coarse grass, with scarce sufficient provision to support the smallest living animal, and water barely enough to moisten their parched lips during the weeks thus devoted to solitary retirement and prayer.

When these recluses can no longer support their self-inflicted privation, they open the door of their hut, a signal anxiously watched for by such persons as have a desire to meet the eye of the holy man, of whom they would inquire on some (to them) interesting

matter; probably regarding their future prospects in the world, the cause of the ill-health and prospects of recovery of a diseased member of their family, or any like subject of interest to the inquirer.

The Soofie, I am told, does not approve of being thus teased by the importunities of the thronging crowd, who beset his threshold the instant his door is heard to open. Being weak in body, after the fatigue of a protracted fast of weeks together, his replies to the questions (preferred always with remarkable humility) are brief and prompt; and the Natives assure me dependence may always be placed on the good Soofie's reply being strictly the words of truth. On this account, even if the oracle's reply disappoint the hopes of the questioner, he retires without a murmur, for then he knows the worst of his calamity, and if God orders it so, he must not complain, because Infinite Wisdom cannot err, and the holy man will assuredly speak the truth.

The practice so long prevailing in Europe of visiting the cunning man, to have the hidden mysteries of fate solved, occurred to my recollection when I first heard of this custom in India.

'Will my son return from his travels during my lifetime?'—was the inquiry of a truly religious man, whom I knew very intimately, to one of the professed Soofie class, on his emerging from his hut. The reply was as follows:—'Go home!—be happy;—comfort your heart;—he is coming!' By a singular coincidence it happened, that the following day's daak produced a letter, announcing to him that his son was on his way returning to his home and his father, who had for some years despaired of ever again seeing his son in this life.

It is needless to say, that the veneration shown to this Soofie was much increased by the singular coincidence, because the person who consulted him was a man of remarkable probity, and not given to indulge in idle conversations with the worldly-minded of that city.

There are many men in this country, I am told, who make Soofieism their profession, but who are in reality hypocrites to the world, and their Maker: actuated sometimes by the love of applause from the multitude, but oftener, I am assured, by mercenary motives. A Soofie enjoying public favour may, if he choose, command any man's wealth who gives credit to his supposed power. All men pay a marked deference to his holy character, and few would have the temerity to withhold the desired sum, however inconvenient to bestow, should the demand be made by one professing to be a Soofie.

The real Soofie is, however, a very different character, and an object of deserved veneration, if only for the virtue of perfect content with which his humble mind is endued: respect cannot be withheld by the reflecting part of the world, when contemplating a fellow-creature (even of a different faith) whose life is passed in sincere devotion to God, and strictly conforming to the faith he has embraced. My Native friends inform me,—and many reprobate the notion,—that the Soofies believe they resolve into the Divine essence when their souls are purified from the animal propensities of this life

by severe privations, fervent and continual prayer, watchings, resisting temptations, and profound meditation in solitude. When they have acquired the perfection they aim at, and are really and truly the perfect Soofie, they rarely quit the hut they have first selected for their retirement, and into which no one ever attempts to intrude, without the Soofie commands it. He enjoys the universal respect and veneration of all classes of people; he has no worldly rewards to bestow, yet there are servants always ready to do him any kindness, amongst the number of his admirers who flock to catch but a glimpse of the holy man, and fancy themselves better when but the light of his countenance has beamed upon them. Proudly pre-eminent, in his own eyes, is the one amongst the multitude who may be so far honoured as to be allowed to place a platter of food before the Soofie, when the imperative demands of Nature prevail over his self-inflicted abstinence.

Some Soofies shut themselves in their hut for a few days, and others for weeks together, without seeing or being seen by a human being. Their general clothing is simply a wrapper of calico, and their only furniture a coarse mat. They are said to be alike insensible to heat or cold, so entirely are their hearts weaned from the indulgence of earthly comforts.

I must explain, however, that there are two classes of the professedly devout Soofies, viz. the Saalik, and the Majoob.[3] The true Saalik Soofies are those who give up the world and its allurements, abstain from all sensual enjoyments, rarely associate with their fellow-men, devote themselves entirely to their Creator, and are insensible to any other enjoyments but such as they derive from their devotional exercises.

The Majoob Soofies have no established home nor earthly possessions; they drink wine and spirits freely, when they can obtain them. Many people suppose this class have lost the possession of their reason, and make excuse for their departure from the law on that score. Both classes are nevertheless in great respect, because the latter are not deemed guilty of breaking the law, since they are supposed to be insensible of their actions whilst indulging in the forbidden juice of the grape.

Haafiz,[4] the celebrated poet of Persia, it is related, was a Soofie of the Majoob class, he lived without a thought of providing for future exigencies, accepted the offerings of food from his neighbour, drank wine freely when offered to him, and slept under any shed or hovel he met with, as contented as if he was in the palace of a king.

Saadie,[5] the Persian poet, was, during the latter years of his life, a Saalik Soofie of the most perfect kind. Many of the inspirations of his pen, however, were written in that part of his life which was devoted to the world and its enjoyments; yet most of these indicate purity of thought in a remarkable degree. Saadie's life was subject to the most extraordinary vicissitudes; he possessed an independent mind, scorning every allurement of wealth which might tend to shackle his principles. He is said to have repeatedly rejected offers of patronage and pecuniary assistance from many noblemen, whilst he still loved the world's enticements, declaring he never could submit to confine himself to attendance on an earthly master for any lengthened period. His wit, pleasing deportment, and polite manners, together with the amiable qualities of his heart, rendered him a

general favourite, and they who could boast most intimacy with Saadie were the most honoured by the world; for, though but the poor Saadie, he shed a lustre over the assemblies of the great and noble in birth or station, by his brilliant mind.

The 'Goolistaun'[6] of Saadie has been so often eulogized, as to render it unnecessary for me to add a single word in commendation of its style and morality; but I will here take leave to insert an anecdote translated for me by my husband, in allusion to the incident which prompted Saadie to write that work, under the title of 'Goolistaun' (Garden of Roses). I will also here remark, that in the principal cities of Persia, the Mussulmauns of that age were not equally rigid in their observance of the law interdicting the use of fermented liquors, as are those of the present day in Hindoostaun. Many young men among the higher orders indulged freely in the 'life-inspiring draught', as they were wont to call the juice of the grape.

'Shiraaz was the abode and the presumptive birth-place of Saadie. In his early years he was led by a love of society to depart from the rigid customs of his forefathers, and with the wild youth of his acquaintance to indulge freely in nightly potations of the forbidden juice of the grape. He had long delighted his friends and favourites by sharing in their nocturnal revels, and adding by his wit and pleasantry to the mirthful moments as they flew by unheeded.

'At a particular season of the year, a convivial party were accustomed to assemble in a garden of roses, from midnight to the rising sun, to indulge in the luxury of wine during that refreshing season; as to receive the first scent from the opening roses as they expand with the dawn of the morning, constituted a delight, proverbially intoxicating, amongst the sons of Persia. Saadie composed many airs for the occasion, and gifted by Nature with a voice equalled only by his wit, he sang them with a melody so sweet as to render him almost the idol of his companions.

'At one of these seasons of enjoyment, the festival was prepared by his circle of friends as usual, but Saadie delayed his visit. The whole party were lost in surprise and regret at an absence as unexpected as deplored. Some time was passed in fruitless conjecture on the cause of his delay, and at last it was agreed that a deputation from his well-beloved associates should go in quest of their favourite. They accordingly went, and knocked at the door of his room, which they found was securely fastened within. The poet inquired "Who is it that disturbs my repose, at this hour, when all good subjects of the King should be at rest?"—"Why, Saadie, Saadie!" they replied, "it is your friends and associates, your favourites!—have you forgotten our enjoyments and this season of bliss? Come, come, open the door, Saadie! away with us! our revels await your presence. Nothing gives enjoyment to our party until you add your smiles to our mirth."

'"Let me alone," replied Saadie; "enjoy your pastime, if such it be to ye; but for me, I am heartily ashamed of my late wanton pursuits. I have resolved on mending my ways, whilst yet I have time; and be ye also wise, my friends; follow Saadie's example. Go home to your beds, and forsake the sinful habits of the world!"

'"Why Saadie, what aileth thee! art thou mad?—or has the study of philosophy drawn thee from thy former self, whilst yet thine hairs are jet with youth? These reflections of thine will suit us till far better when time hath frosted our beards. Come, come, Saadie, away with us! let not the precious moments escape in this unprofitable converse. You must come, Saadie; our hearts will break without you!"

'"Nay, nay," responded Saadie, "my conscience smites me that I have erred too long. It suits not my present temper to join in your mirth."—"Open the door to us at any rate," sounded from the many voices without; "speak to us face to face, our dear and well-beloved friend! let us have admission, and we will argue the subject coolly."—Saadie's good-nature could not resist the appeal, the door was unbarred, and the young men entered in a body.

'"We have all wickedly broken the law of the faithful," said Saadie to his guests; and he tried to reason with his unreasonable favourites, who, on their part, used raillery, bantering, argument, and every power of speech, to turn Saadie from his steady purpose of now fulfilling the law he had wilfully violated. They effected nothing in moving him from his purpose, until one of the young men, to whom Saadie was much attached, spoke tenderly to him of the affection both himself and friends entertained for him, adding, "It is written in our law, that if a Mussulmaun be guilty of any sin, however great, (and all kinds of sin are therein enumerated), and he afterwards sincerely repents before God, with fasting and prayer, his sins shall be forgiven. Now you, Saadie, who are deeply versed in the way of wisdom, and better acquainted with the words of the Khoraun than any other man on earth, tell me, is there in that holy book a promise made of forgiveness for that man who breaks the hearts of his fellow-creatures? With us there are many hearts so devotedly attached to you, that must assuredly burst the bonds of life by your complete and sudden desertion of them, so that not one sin but many shall be hurled by their deaths on your conscience, to be atoned for how you may."

'Saadie loved them all too dearly to resist their persevering proofs of affection, and he suffered himself, after a little more argument, to be led forth to the scene of their revels, where, however, he argued strongly on the impropriety of their habits and refused to be tempted by the alluring wine. He then promised to prepare for them a never-fading garden of roses which should last with the world; every leaf of which, if plucked with attention, should create a greater and more lasting bliss about their hearts than the best wine of Shiraaz, or the most refined aromatic had hitherto conveyed to their sensual appetites.'

After the evening in question, Saadie abstained from all participation in the revels of his friends, and devoted his hours to retirement that he might accomplish the 'Goolistaun' he had pledged himself to cultivate for their more substantial benefit and perpetual enjoyment. The simplicity, elegance, purity of style, and moral precepts conveyed in this work, prove the author to have been worthy the respect with which his name has been reverenced through all ages, and to this day, by the virtuously disposed his work is read with unabated interest.

Saadie did not remain very long at Shiraaz after his conversion, nor did he settle any where for any long period. The Persian writers assert that he disliked the importunities of the world, which, sensible of his merits as a poet and companion, constantly urged him to associate with them. He, therefore, lived a wandering life for many years, carefully concealing his name, which had then become so celebrated by his writings, that even beyond the boundaries of Persia his fame was known.

As his manner of life was simple, his wants were few; he depended solely on the care of Divine Providence for his daily meal, avoiding every thing like laying by from to-day's produce for the morrow's sustenance. He considered that provision alone acceptable, which the bounty of Divine Providence daily provided for his need, by disposing the hearts of others to tender a suitable supply. In fact, he is said to have been of opinion that the store laid up by men for future exigencies lessened the delightful feeling of dependance on the bounty of God, who faileth not, day by day, to provide for the birds and beasts of the forest with equal care as for the prince on his throne; he would say, 'I shall be tempted to forget from whom my bread is received, if I have coins in my purse to purchase from the vender. Sweet is the daily bread granted to my prayers and dependance on the sole Giver of all good!'

To illustrate the necessity of perfect content, he relates, in his writings, the following interesting anecdote:—'I was once travelling on foot, where the roads were rugged, my shoes worn out, and my feet cut by the stones. I was desirous of pursuing my journey quickly, and secretly mourned that my feet pained me, and that my shoes were now rendered useless; often wishing, as I stepped with caution, that I possessed the means of replenishing these articles so useful to a traveller.

'With these feelings of dissatisfaction, I approached the spot where a poor beggar was seated, who, by some calamity, had been deprived of both his feet. I viewed this sad object with much commiseration, for he was dependant on the kindness of his fellow-beggars to convey him daily to that public spot, where the passing traveller, seeing his misery, might be induced to bestow upon him a few coins to provide for his subsistence. "Alas! alas!" said I, "how have I suffered my mind to be disturbed because my feet pained me, and were shoeless. Ungrateful being that I am! rather ought I to rejoice with an humble heart, that my gracious Benefactor hath granted me the blessing of feet, and sound health. Never let me again murmur or repine for the absence of a luxury, whilst my real wants are amply supplied."'

One of my objects in detailing the anecdotes of Saadie in this place, is to give a more correct idea of the Soofie character of that particular class called Saalik, to which he ultimately belonged.

The next translation from the life of Saadie will show how beautifully his well-tempered spirit soared above those difficulties which the common mind would have sunk under. His fame, his superior manners, were of that rare kind, that distance from his birth-place could be no obstacle to his making friends, if he chose to disclose his name in any city of Asia.

I have no dates to guide me in placing the several anecdotes in their proper order; this, however, will be excused, as I do not pretend to give his history.

'On one occasion, Saadie was journeying on foot, and being overtaken by the Arabs, (who, or a party of, it may be presumed, were at war with Persia), he was taken prisoner, and conveyed by them, with many others, to Aleppo. The prisoners, as they arrived, were all devoted to the public works (fortifying the city), and obliged to labour according to their ability.

'Saadie, unused to any branch of mechanical labour, could only be employed in conveying mortar to the more scientific workmen. For many months he laboured in this way, degrading as the employment was, without a murmur, or a desire that his fate had been otherways ordained. Hundreds of men then living in Aleppo would have been proud of the honour and the good name they must have acquired from the world, by delivering the Poet from his thraldom, had they known he was amongst them, a slave to the Arabs; for Saadie was revered as a saint by those who had either read his works, or heard of his name, extolled as it was for his virtues. But Saadie placed his trust in God alone, and his confidence never for an instant forsook him; he kept his name concealed from all around him, laboured as commanded, and was contented.

'Many months of degrading servitude had passed by, when one day, it so happened that a rich Jew merchant, who had formerly lived at Shiraaz, and there had been honoured by the regard of the idolized Saadie, visited Aleppo, on his mercantile concerns. Curiosity led him to survey the improvements going on in the city; and passing the spot where Saadie was then presenting his load of mortar to the mason, he thought he recognized the Poet, yet deemed it impossible that he should be engaged in so degrading an employment, who was the object of universal veneration in Persia. Still the likeness to his former friend was so striking, that he felt no trifling degree of pleasure, whilst contemplating those features whose resemblance recalled the image of that holy man who was so dear to him, and brought back to his recollection many delightful hours of friendly converse, which at Shiraaz had cheated time of its weight, and left impressions on his heart to profit by during life.

'"I will talk with this man," thought the Jew; "surely he must be related to my friend; the face, the form, the graceful manner, and even in that rude garb and occupation, he so strongly resembles my friend, that I cannot doubt he must be of the same kindred."

'Drawing near to Saadie, the Jew accosted him with, "Who are you, friend,—and whence do you come?" Saadie's voice dispelled every doubt of the Jew, their eyes met, and in a few seconds they were clasped in each other's warm embrace, the Jew lamenting, in terms of warm sympathy, the degradation of the immortalized poet, and sainted man; whilst he in turn checked his friend's murmurings, by expressing his conviction that the wisdom of God knew best how to lead his confiding servants to himself, declaring his present occupation did not render him discontented.

'The Jew went without delay to the superintendant of the public works, and inquired the sum he would be willing to receive in lieu of the labourer whom he desired to purchase, carefully avoiding the name of Saadie lest the ransom should be proportioned to the real value of such a slave. The man agreed to take one hundred and ten pieces of silver (each in value half a dollar). The sum was promptly paid, and the Jew received an order to take away his purchase when and wherever he pleased. He lost no time in possessing himself of his treasured friend, conveyed him to the city, where he clothed him in apparel better suited to his friend, and on the same day Saadie accompanied the benevolent Israelite to his country residence, some miles distant from the city of Aleppo.

'Arrived here, Saadie enjoyed uninterrupted peace of mind for a long season, his heart bounding with gratitude to God, who had, he felt assured, worked out his deliverance from slavery and its consequences; and as may be supposed from such a heart, Saadie was truly sensible of the benevolent Jew's kindness, with whom he was constrained to remain a considerable time, for the Jew indeed loved him as a brother, and always grieved at the bare probability that they might ever again be separated; and desiring to secure his continuance with him during their joint lives, he proposed that Saadie should accept his only daughter in marriage with a handsome dowry.

'Saadie resisted his friend's offer for some time, using arguments which, instead of altering his friend's purpose, only strengthened the desire to secure this amiable man as the husband of his daughter. Saadie assured him he was sensible of the offence his friend might give to the opinions of his people, by the proposal of uniting his daughter to a man of another faith, and that their prejudices would bring innumerable evils on his good name by such an alliance. "No," said Saadie, "I cannot consent to such a measure. I have already been a great trouble to you, if not a burden; let me depart, for I cannot consent to draw down on the head of my friend the censures of his tribe, and, perhaps, in after-time, disappointments. I have, indeed, no desire to marry; my heart and mind are otherways engaged."

'The friends often discussed the subject ere Saadie gave way to the earnest solicitations of the Jew, to whose happiness the grateful heart of Saadie was about to be sacrificed when he reluctantly consented to become the husband of the young Jewess. The marriage ceremony was performed according to the Jewish rites, when Saadie was overpowered with the caresses and munificence of his friend and father-in-law.

'A very short season of domestic peace resulted to him from the alliance. The young lady had been spoiled by the over-indulgence of her doating parent, her errors of temper and mind having never been corrected. Proud, vindictive, and arrogant, she played the part of tyrant to her meek and faultless husband. She strove to rouse his temper by taunts, revilings, and indignities that required more than mortal nature to withstand replying to, or bear with composure.

'Still Saadie went on suffering in silence; although the trials he had to endure undermined his health, he never allowed her father to know the misery he had entailed on himself by this compliance with his well-meant wishes; nor was the secret cause of his altered

appearance suspected by the kind-hearted Jew, until by common report his daughter's base behaviour was disclosed to the wretched father, who grieved for the misfortunes he had innocently prepared for the friend of his heart.

'Saadie, it is said, entreated the good Jew to allow of a divorce from the Jewess, which, however, was not agreed to; and when his sufferings had so increased that his tranquillity was destroyed, fearing the loss of reason would follow, he fled from Aleppo in disguise and retraced his steps to Shiraaz, where in solitude his peace of mind was again restored, for there he could converse with his merciful Creator and Protector uninterrupted by the strife of tongues.'

[1] *Hudhud*, the lapwing, hoopoe. In the Koran (xxvii. 20, with Sale's note) the bird is described as carrying a letter from Solomon to the Queen of Sheba. On another occasion, when Solomon was lost in the desert, he sent it to procure for him water for ablution.

[2] The term *sufi*, derived from *suf*, 'wool', in allusion to the garments worn by them, was applied in the second century of Islam to men or women who adopted the ascetic or quietistic way of life. See Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 608 ff.: D.B. Macdonald, *The Development of Muslim Theology*, 1903: E.G. Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 1893.

[3] If a Sufi becomes, by devotion, attracted to God, he is called *Salik-i-majzub*, 'an attracted devotee': if he practises complete devotion, but is not influenced by the special attraction of God, he is called *Salik*, 'a devotee' (Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 612: Jaffur Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, 197).

[4] See p. 255.

[5] See p. 255.

[6] Gulistan.

LETTER XXIV

The Soofies continued.—Eloy Bauxh.—Assembly of Saalik Soofies.—Singular exhibition of their zeal.—Mystery of Soofeism.—The terms Soofie and Durweish explained.—Anecdote of Shah Sherif.—Shah Jee and the Paltaan.—Dialogue on death between Shah Jee and his wife.—Exemplary life of his grandson.—Anecdote of a Mussulmaun lady.—Reflections on modern Hindoos.—Anecdotes of Shah ood Dowlah and Meer Nizaam…Page 348

My last Letter introduced the Soofies to your notice, the present shall convey a further account of some of these remarkable characters who have obtained so great celebrity among the Mussulmauns of India, as to form the subjects of daily conversation. I have heard some rigid Mussulmauns declare they discredit the mysterious knowledge a Soofie is said to possess, yet the same persons confess themselves staggered by the singular circumstances attending the practice of Soofies living in their vicinity, which they have either witnessed or heard related by men whose veracity they cannot doubt; amongst the number I may quote an intimate acquaintance of my husband's, a very venerable Syaad of Lucknow, who relates an anecdote of Saalik Soofies, which I will here introduce.

'Meer Eloy Bauxh,[1] a Mussulmaun of distinguished piety, who has devoted a long life to the service of God, and in doing good to his fellow-men, tells me, that being curious to witness the effect of an assembly of Saalik Soofies, he went with a party of friends, all equally disposed with himself to be amused by the eccentricities of the Soofies, whose practice they ridiculed as at least absurd,—to speak in no harsher terms of their pretended supernatural gifts.

'This assembly consisted of more than a hundred persons, who by agreement met at a large hall in the city of Lucknow, for the purpose of "remembering the period of absence", as they term the death of a highly revered Soofie of their particular class. The room being large, and free admittance allowed to all persons choosing to attend the assembly, Meer Eloy Bauxh and his party entered, and seated themselves in a convenient place for the more strict scrutiny of the passing-scene.

'The service for the occasion began with a solemn strain by the musical performers, when one of the inspired Soofies commenced singing in a voice of remarkable melody. The subject was a hymn of praise to the great Creator, most impressively composed in the Persian language. Whilst the Soofie was singing, one of the elders in particular,—though all seemed sensibly affected by the strain,—rose from his seat, in what the Soofies themselves call, "the condition changed," which signifies, by what I could learn, a religious ecstasy. This person joined in the same melody which the other Soofie had begun, and at the same time accompanied the music by capering and sobbing in the wildest manner imaginable. His example had the effect of exciting all the Soofies on whom his eyes were cast to rise also and join him in the hymn and dance.

'The singularity of this scene seemed, to Meer Eloy Bauxh and his party, so ludicrous that they could not refrain from laughing in an audible manner, which attracted the attention of the principal Soofie engaged in the dance, who cast his eyes upon the merry party, not, however, apparently in anger. Strange as he confesses it to be,—and even now it seems more like a dream than a reality,—at the moment he met the eye of the Soofie, there was an instant glow of pure happiness on his heart, a sensation of fervent love to God, which he had never before felt, in his most devout moments of prayer and praise; his companions were similarly affected, their eyes filled with tears, their very souls seemed elevated from earth to heaven in the rapture of their songs of adoration, which burst forth from their lips in unison with the whole Soofie assemblage.

'Before they had finished their song of praise, which lasted a considerable time, the chief of the Soofie party sunk exhausted on the carpet, whilst the extraordinary display of devotion continued in full force on the whole assembly, whether Soofies or mere visitors, for many minutes after the principal devotee had fallen to the floor. Water was then procured, and animation gradually returned to the poor exhausted devotee, but with considerable delay. Meer Eloy Bauxh says he waited until the Soofie was perfectly restored to sense, and saw him taken to his place of abode; he then returned to his own home to meditate on the events of a day he never can forget.'

Soofeism, it appears, (by the accounts I have received,) is a mystery; the secret of which can only be imparted by the professor to such persons as have been prepared for its reception, by a course of religious instruction. No one can be initiated into the mystery who has not first renounced all worldly vanities and ambitious projects—who is not sincerely repentant of past offences—who has not acquired perfect humility of heart, and an entire resignation to the Divine Will—a lively faith in God, and a firm determination to love and serve Him, from a conviction, 'That God alone is worthy to be served, loved, and worshipped by His creatures.' Thus prepared, the person is to receive instruction from a Calipha, (head or leader of the Soofies), who directs the pupil in certain exercises of the heart, which constitute the secrets of their profession. What these exercises are, I am not competent to give an opinion, but judging by the way a real Soofie conducts himself, it may be presumed his practices are purely religious; for I am assured that he is devoted to all good ways; that he carefully avoids worldly vanities, and every species of temptation and alluring gratification of the senses; that he is incessant in prayer, and in fasting severe; free from all prejudice, as regards the belief or persuasion of other men, so long as they worship God alone; regarding all mankind as brothers, himself the humblest of the race; claiming no merit for the ascendancy he has acquired over earthly wishes, he gives glory alone to God, whom he loves and worships.

All the Durweish are of the Mussulmaun persuasion. Many are devout Durweish, who are, nevertheless, unacquainted with the mystery of Soofeism; and, to use their own words, (by which the Natives distinguish them), 'Every real Soofie is undoubtedly a Durweish, but all Durweishes are not Soofies,' although their lives may be devoted much in the same holy way, both in the practice of religion and abstinence from worldly enjoyments; and if the writers on these subjects may be believed, many wonderful cures have been effected by the prayers of the devout Durweish.

There are some pretenders, I am told, who put themselves forth to the world in the character of a Durweish, who are not, in fact, entitled to the appellation,—hypocritical devotees, who wear the outward garb of humility, without the feeling of that inward virtue which is the characteristic principle of the true Durweish. The distinction between the real and the pretended Durweish, may be illustrated by the following anecdote which I have received from the mouth of Meer Hadjee Shaah:—

'In the last century,' he says, 'there lived at or near Delhi, a very pure-minded Durweish, named Shah Sherif ood deen Mah-mood,[2] (he was known in his latter years by several of my aged acquaintance at Lucknow, and his son and grandson both lived, at different

periods, in that city). This person forsook the world whilst in the prime of manhood, and devoted himself to prayer, fasting, and good deeds. He was esteemed the most humble-minded of human beings, and his devotion to his Maker sincere and ardent. His principal abode was Delhi, where his wife and children also resided, to whom he was tenderly attached; yet so tempered were his affections, that he never allowed any earthly endearments to interfere with his devotions, or to separate him from his love to his Creator.

'It was announced by the Soofies and Durweish, that on a certain day a festival or assembly of holy men would meet for the service of God, at the Jummah musjud[3] (Friday mosque), situated in the city of Delhi.

'Shah Sherif ood deen was disposed to attend the meeting, which consisted of the heads or superiors of several classes of the religious, with their disciples and followers. At this meeting, as was expected, were assembled the Soofies, Durweish, and religious mendicants of all ranks and conditions, from those clothed in gold-cloth and brocade, down to the almost naked Faakeer;[4] and amongst the latter number may be classed the humble-minded Shah Sherif ood deen. A small wrapper girt about his loins by a girdle of black wool spun into small ropes, and a similar article wound round his head, with a coarse white sheet over his shoulders for his summer apparel; and a black blanket to shelter his naked limbs from the cold winter, formed his sole wardrobe.

'This holy man took his station in the most humble spot of the assembly, "sitting amongst the shoes" of the more esteemed or more aspiring personages. As there was nothing remarkable in his appearance, he remained unobserved, or unnoticed by the multitude present. Many of the assembly made great display of their right to pre-eminence, by the costliness of their robes, the splendour of their equipage, and the number of their servants; striving to command respect, if possible, by their superior external habiliments.

'This meeting had been convened to celebrate the death of one of their order, which had occurred some years prior. After prayers had been read, suited to the occasion, a poor man, whose very appearance might excite compassion, addressed the heads of the devotees with folded hands, beseeching them, who were accounted so truly holy in their lives, to offer up a prayer for him who had so long suffered severe affliction, by reason of his neck and face being drawn awry, from a paralytic attack, or some like calamity. The sufferer said, "I am a poor merchant, and have a large family dependant altogether on my personal exertions for support; but, alas! this illness prevents me from attending to the business of life. I am wasting both in body and in substance through this grievous affliction."

'The sick man's address was heard by the whole assembly in silence; many present, both Soofies and Durweish, were really pious men, and were willing to allow the person who seemed to be the head of this assembly, to intercede in behalf of the sufferer. To him they all looked, expecting he would commence a prayer in which they might join; but he, it is suspected, conscious of his own duplicity in assuming only the character of a Soofie without the virtues, was anxious to dismiss the supplicant, with a promise that prayer

should certainly be made for him in private, adding, "This is not a proper season for your application; it is disrespectful to disturb our meeting with your requests; we came not here to listen to your importunities, but on more important, business."

'"True, my Lord," answered the afflicted man; "I am sensible of all you say; but, I do assure you, private prayer has been tried for my relief by many individuals of your holy profession, and I have still to mourn my calamity. I thought when so many holy persons were assembled together, the united prayer—in accordance with our Prophet's commands—offered up at this time, would certainly be received at the throne of Mercy. I entreat then, at the hands of this venerable assembly, the aid I require."

'The pretended Soofie looked haughtily on the sick man, and bade him retire to his home; he should have a prayer offered, he might depend, but it must be in private. The sufferer was still importunate, and urged every argument he could command, to induce the inexorable Soofie to allow the present assembly to offer a prayer on the spot for his recovery; but nothing he could urge availed with the proud Soofie, who at length grew angry even to the use of bitter words.

'Shah Sherif ood deen observed in silence the scene before him; at length he ventured (in the most respectful terms) to suggest to the heads of the assembly the propriety of vouchsafing the poor man's request; and hinted that, the prayer of some one more pure of heart than the rest might effectually reach the throne of Mercy in behalf of the supplicant.

'"And pray," said the leader, rising haughtily, "who gave you leave to suggest or recommend to your superiors in knowledge and virtue? Is not our determination sufficient, that you, insignificant being! should presume to teach us what we ought to do?—you can know nothing of the Durweish's powerful prayers, nor the mystery of a Soofie's holy calling."

'"I am, indeed, a very ignorant and unworthy creature," replied Shah Sherif, "and acknowledge my great presumption in daring to speak before so many of my superiors in knowledge and virtue; but we are told in our hudeeths (true speech) that the prayers of many hearts may prevail in a good cause, whilst singly offered the same prayer might fail," The proud Soofie's anger seemed to increase as the Durweish spoke; he bade him keep silence, and reviled him with many bitter words, which the good Shah received with his usual humility and forbearance. At length, the Shah looked attentively at the Soofie, who had thus rebuked and insulted him, and said, "I will believe, Sir, you are the Soofie you aspire to be thought among your fellow-men, if you will immediately offer up your single prayer, by which the suffering man may be relieved; for we know such prayers have been answered by the gracious Giver of all good."

'"What do you know of the powerful prayer of the Soofie?" replied the proud man, "I suspect you to be an impostor in your humble exterior."—"No, " said the Shah, "I am but a poor beggar, and a humble, the very humblest servant of God."—"You pretend to much humility," retorted the Soofie, "suppose we see one of your miraculous works in answer to your prayer; it would please us to witness what you can do."

'Shah Sherif ood deen raised his eyes to Heaven, his heart went with his prayer, and in a dignified manner he stretched forth his hand towards the afflicted person. The man was instantly restored; then drawing his hand into a direct line with the proud Soofie, and pointing his finger to him, he said, "What more, friend, dost them now require of me? The man's affliction is removed, but the power which is delegated to me rests still on my finger; command me, to whom shall I present it; to you, or any one of your people?"

'The proud Soofie hung his head abashed and confounded, he had not power to answer. The Shah observed his confusion and said, "It is not well to pray for relief to one poor weak fellow-creature, and then to afflict another; to the mountain's retreat, I will consign this malady." Then shaking his hand as if to relieve himself from a heavy weight, he uttered in a solemn tone, "Go to the mountains!" and resumed that humble seat he had first chosen with a smile of composure beaming on his countenance.' This miracle is actually believed by the Natives to be true.

Shah Sherif ood deen, say the people who know him, spent the principal part of each day and night in silent prayer and meditation; no one ever ventured to intrude within his small sanctuary, but hundreds of people would assemble outside the building, in front of which he occasionally sat for an hour, but scarcely ever conversed with any one of his visitors. During the time he was thus seated, he generally raised his eyes once or twice, and looked round on the faces of his audience. It was generally remarked, that no one could meet the eye of Shah Jee—that familiar appellation by which he was known—without an indescribable sensation of reverential awe, which irresistibly compelled them to withdraw their eyes. The talismanic power of Shah Jee's eyes had become proverbial throughout the city of Delhi. A certain Pattaan,[5] however, of warlike appearance, a man remarkable for his bravery, declared amongst his associates that he would certainly out-stare Shah Jee, if ever they met, which he was resolved should be the very first opportunity; he accordingly went with his companions at a time when this Durweish was expected to appear in public.

The Pattaan was seated on the floor with many other people; when the Shah issued from his sanctuary, the people rose to make their salaams, which Shah Jee either did not, or would not observe, but seated himself according to his custom on the mat which had been spread for him; where, his eyes fixed on the ground, he seemed for some time to be wholly absorbed in silent meditation. At length, raising his head, he turned his face to the long line of spectators, saluting with his eyes each person in the row, until he came to the Pattaan, who, according to his vow, kept his large eyes fixed on the Durweish. Shah Jee went on with his survey, and a second time cast a glance along the whole line, not omitting the Pattaan as before, whose gaze, his companions observed, was as firmly settled on the Durweish as at the first. A third time the eyes of the Shah went round the assembly and rested again on the Pattaan.

Observing the immoveable eyes of their Pattaan acquaintance, the visitors smiled at each other, and secretly gave him credit for a piety and pureness of heart which he was not before supposed to be blessed with; 'How else,' said they, 'would he have been able to

withstand the penetrating glance of the revered Durweish.' Shah Jee rose from his seat, and retired, thus giving to the company a signal for their departure from the place.

The associates of the Pattaan congratulated him on his success, and inquired by what stratagem he had so well succeeded in fulfilling his promise; but his eyes being still fixed in a wild stare, he replied not to his questioners. They rallied him, and tried by a variety of means to dissolve his reverie; but the Pattaan was insensible, all the boasted energies of his mind having forsaken him. His friends were now alarmed at his abstractedness, and with considerable difficulty removed him from the place to his own home, where his family received him, for the first time, with grief, as he was their whole stay and support, and the kind head of a large family.

The Pattaan continued staring in the same state throughout the night and following day, talking wildly and incoherently. 'The Pattaan is paid for his presumption,' said some; others recommended application to be made to the Durweish, Shah Jee, who could alone remove the calamity. The wife and mother, with many female dependants, resolved on pleading his case with the benevolent Shah Jee; but as access to him would be difficult, they conceived the idea of making their petition through the agency of the wife of the Durweish, to whom they accordingly went in a body at night, and related their distress, and the manner in which they supposed it to have originated, declaring, in conclusion, that as the excellent Durweish had been pleased to cast this affliction on their guardian, they must become slaves to his family, since bread could no longer be provided by the labour of him who had hitherto been their support.

The wife of the Durweish comforted the women by kind words, desiring them to wait patiently until her dear lord could be spoken with, as she never ventured to intrude on his privacy at an improper moment, however urgent the necessity. After a few hours' delay, passed with impatient feeling by the group of petitioning females, they were at length repaid by the voice of Shah Jee. His wife going to the door of his apartment, told him of the circumstance attending the Pattaan, and the distressed condition of the females of his family, who came to supplicate his aid in restoring their relative to reason; adding, 'What commands will you be pleased to convey by me? What remedy do you propose for the suffering Pattaan?'

The Durweish answered, 'His impure heart, then, could not withstand the reflected light. Well, well! tell the poor women to be comforted, and as they desire to have the Pattaan restored to his former state, they need only purchase some sweetmeats from the bazaar, which the man being induced to eat, he will speedily be restored to his wonted bodily and mental powers.'

Upon hearing the commands of Shah Jee, the women speedily departed, ejaculating blessings on the Durweish, his wife, and family. On their return they purchased the sweetmeats and presented them to the Pattaan, who devoured them with eagerness, and immediately afterwards his former senses returned, to the no small joy of his family circle. They inquired of him, what had been the state of his feelings during the time he was in that insensible state from which he was now happily relieved? He replied, that the

first gaze of the Durweish had fixed his eyes so firmly that he could by no means close or withdraw them from the object; the second glance detached his thoughts from every earthly vanity or wish; and that the third look from the same holy person, fixed him in unspeakable joys, transports pure and heavenly, which continued until he had eaten the sweetmeats they had presented, with a kind intention, he had no doubt, but which nevertheless, must be ever regretted by him whilst life remained; for no earthly joy could be compared with that which he had experienced in his trance.

The Durweish Shah Sherif ood deen, was asked by some one why he had selected the bazaar sweetmeats as a remedy in the Pattaan's case? He answered, 'Because I knew the man's heart was corrupt. The light which had been imparted to him could alone be removed by his partaking of the dirtiest thing mortals hold good for food, and surely there cannot be any thing more dirty than the bazaar sweetmeats, exposed as they are to the flies and dust of the city; and how filthily they are manufactured requires not my aid in exposing.'

This Durweish is said,—and believed by the good Mussulmaun people I have conversed with,—to have foreseen the hour when he should be summoned from this life into eternity; and three weeks prior to the appointed time, he endeavoured to fortify the minds of his wife and family, to bear with resignation that separation he had been warned should take place. He assembled his affectionate relatives on the occasion, and thus addressed them, 'My dear family, it is the will of God that we should part; on such a day (mentioning the time), my soul will take flight from its earthly mansion. Be ye all comforted, and hereafter, if ye obey God's holy law, ye shall meet me again in a blessed eternity.'

As may be supposed, the females wept bitterly; they were distressed, because the good Durweish had ever been kind, indulgent, affectionate, and tender in all the relative situations he held amongst them. He tried many soothing arguments to comfort and console them for some hours, but without in the least reducing their grief, or moderating their bewailings: they could not, and would not be comforted.

'Well,' said the Durweish, 'since the separation I have predicted causes you all so much sorrow, it would be better, perhaps, that we part not. I have thought of another method to avoid the pangs of separation; I will offer my prayers this night to the gracious Giver of all good, that He may be pleased to permit ye all to bear me company in death.'

'Oh! stay your prayer!' said the wife of the Durweish; 'this must not be; for if we all die at once, who will perform the funeral rites, and deposit our bodies in the earth?' The Durweish smiled at his wife's objection, and answered, 'This is of no consequence to us, dear wife: the body may be likened to a garment that is thrown off when old; the soul having worn its earthly covering for a season, at the appointed time shakes off the perishable piece of corruption, to enter into a purer state of existence. It matters not if the body have a burial or not; the soul takes no cognizance of the clay it has quitted. Yet, if it be a matter of great consideration with you, be assured that many pious men and

Durweish, whose respect we have enjoyed in life, will not fail to give decent interment to the remains of those they have loved and respected.'

This for a moment baffled the wife in her argument; but presently she persuasively urged that her daughters were all young, that they had as yet seen but little of this world, and therefore it would be cruel to take them away so soon; they must desire to see more of this life ere they entered on another state of existence. 'Oh, my wife,' said the Durweish, 'you reason badly; this life hath no joys to be compared with those which the righteous man's hopes lead him to expect in the world beyond the grave. I will assuredly make my promised prayer, if I find a semblance of remaining grief upon separating from me at the appointed time, for our removal to perfect happiness.'

'No, no!' was cried by all the assembled family; 'do let us remain a little longer here, we are not in a hurry to quit this world.'—'Well, well, be satisfied then,' responded the Durweish, 'if such is your desire; and hereafter let me not hear a sigh or a murmur from one of you, for my appointed time is drawing to a close; if you will not accompany me, let me, at least, depart in peace.'

The people who relate this (and I have heard the anecdote from many) add, that the Durweish Shah Sherif ood deen Mah-mood died at the close of the third week, and on the day and hour he had predicted.

A grandson of this Durweish I have been writing about is still living in India, remarkable for a very retentive memory and propriety of life. I have not met with this gentleman during my residence in India, but have often heard his name mentioned with respect by Meer Hadjee Shaah who knew him well. He says that this Syaad, when but a boy, learned the whole Khoraun by heart[6] in the short space of forty days; he adds, that this person is exemplary in his life, and in his habits and manners humble; that he is truly a servant of God; rejects the mystic tenets of Soofieism; possesses an enlightened mind, and is a Moollah or Doctor of the Mussulmaun law. I have heard many singular anecdotes of his life, proving his disregard for riches, honours, and the vain pursuits of the worldly-minded. If I recollect right, he once was engaged in the confidential office of Moonshie to a highly talented gentleman at Fort William, from which employment he retired and took up his abode for some time at Lucknow; from whence, it was said, he went to Hydrabaad, where, it is probable, he may still be found in the exercise of a religious course of life. His name is respected by all the good men of his own persuasion, with whom I have been most intimately acquainted.

Conceiving the subject may be interesting to my friends, I will not offer any apology for introducing to your notice a female character of great merit, whose death occurred during my residence in the vicinity of her abode. I was induced to make memorandums of the circumstances which brought the knowledge of her virtues more immediately before the public.

Maulvee Meer Syaad Mahumud[7] succeeded, on the death of his father, in 1822, to the exalted position amongst Mussulmauns of head leader and expounder of the Mahumudan

law in the city of Lucknow; he is a person of unassuming manners and extreme good sense, is an upright, honest-hearted, religious man, meriting and receiving the respect and good opinion of all his countrymen capable of appreciating the worthiness of his general deportment. He is esteemed the most learned person of the present age amongst Asiatic scholars; and occupies his time in study and devotion, and in giving gratuitous instruction to youth, at stated hours, in those laws which he makes his own rule of life. Neither is the good Maulvee's fame confined to the city in which he sojourns, as may be gathered from the following anecdote, which exhibits the upright principles of this worthy man, at the same time that it discloses the character of a very amiable female, whose charity was as unbounded as her memory is revered in Furrukhabaad.

'The late Nuwaub of Furrukhabaad[8] was first married to a lady of birth and good fortune, Villoiettee Begum,[9] by whom he was not blessed with a son; but he had other wives, one of whom bore him an heir, who at the present time enjoys the musnud of his father.

'Villoiettee Begum was beautiful in person, and possessed a heart of the most benevolent and rare kind; her whole delight was centred in the exercises of those duties which her religion inculcated; she spent much of her time in prayer, in acquiring a knowledge of the Khoraun, in acts of kindness to her fellow-creatures, and in strict abstinence.

'It was her unvaried custom at meals before she touched a morsel herself, to have twelve portions of food, selected from the choicest viands provided for her use, set apart for as many poor people; and when they had been served, she humbly and sparingly partook of the meal before her. She was possessed of great wealth, yet never expended any portion of it in the extravagances of dress; indeed, so humble was her appearance, that she might have been mistaken for the meanest of her slaves or domestics. It was her usual custom, whenever she purchased new clothing for her own wear, to lay in a large store for the poor; and it is affirmed, by those who were long intimate with the family, that a supplicant was never known to pass her door without relief. She even sought out, with the aid of a faithful domestic, the modest poor who were restrained by their feelings from intruding their necessities; and her liberal donations were distributed in so kind a manner, that even the pride of birth could never feel distressed when receiving her charitable assistance.

'This lady was much attached to the duties of her religion, and delighted in acquiring instruction from righteous persons of her own faith. She showered favours on all the poor who were reported to live in the fear of God; indeed, such was the liberality, benevolence, and unvaried charity of this good lady, that the news of her death was received by hundreds of people as their greatest earthly calamity. The example of this lady's character is the more enhanced by reflecting on the retired way in which she was reared and lived, restrained by the customs of her people within the high walls of a zeenahnah, without the advantages of a liberal education or the immediate society of intelligent people. She seems, by all accounts, to have been a most perfect pattern of human excellence.

'In forming her will (Villoiettee Begum had been a widow several years before her death), she does not appear to have wished a single thing to be done towards perpetuating her name,—as is usual with the great, in erecting lofty domes over the deposited clay of the Mussulmaun,—but her immense wealth was chiefly bequeathed in charitable gifts. The holy and the humble were equally remembered in its distribution. She had been acquainted with the virtues of the good Maulvee of Lucknow, to whom she left a handsome sum of money for his own use, and many valuable articles to fit up the Emaum-baarah for the service of Mahurrum, with a, desire that the same should be conveyed to him as soon after her death as convenient. Her vakeel (agent) wrote to Meer Syaad Mahumud very soon after the lady's death, to apprise him of the bequest Villoiettee Begum had willed to him, and at the same time forwarded the portable articles to him at Lucknow.

'The Maulvee was much surprised, and fancied there must be some mistake in the person for whom this legacy was intended, as the lady herself was entirely unknown to him, and an inhabitant of a station so remote from his own residence as not likely ever to have heard of him. He, however, replied to the vakeel, and wrote also to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, desiring to have a strict inquiry instituted before he could venture to accept the riches of this lady's bounty, presuming that even if he was the person alluded to in her will, that the Begum must have intended him as her almoner to the poor of Lucknow. The good, upright Maulvee acted on the integrity of his heart and desired a strict scrutiny might be instituted into the will of the deceased, which was accordingly made, and he was assured in reply, that Villoiettee Begum had been long acquainted with his worth, and in her liberal bequest she had decidedly intended the money for his sole use and benefit, in testimony of her respect for his virtuous character. The Maulvee again wrote and requested to be informed by those most intimate with the Begum's way of life, whether she had left unperformed any of the duties incumbent on a member of the faithful, as regards zuckhaut[10], pilgrimage, the fast, &c.? which not having accomplished, and having ample means, he felt himself bound, in the situation he held, to devote her legacy to the purpose of such duties by proxy (which their law commands) in her name. He was in reply assured that the good Begum had not omitted any part of her duty; she had regularly applied zuckhaut, duly performed the fast, had paid the expenses for poor pilgrims to Mecca (her substitutes); and not until all the scruples of the just Maulvec had been removed would he hear of, or accept the Begum's legacy.'

The anecdote I have now given will serve to illustrate the character of some good people of Hindoostaun of the present day; indeed, the veneration and respect paid by all classes to those men who lead religious lives, is but little changed from the earlier pages of the Mussulmaun history. I have just met with a Durweish anecdote, of former times, that may be worth transcribing, as I have received it from Meer Hadjee Shaah, whose aid I am so much indebted to for subjects with which to amuse my friends.

'Shaah ood Dowlah[11] was a Durweish who flourished in the reign of King Shah Jaluui at Delhi, but whose fame is known throughout India to the present day. The Durweish was remarkable for his activity of body. It is related, that he was often to be seen at prayer in Delhi, and in three hours after he had transported himself eighty miles oil

without any visible assistance but his own personal activity on foot. This extraordinary rapidity of movement rendered him an object of veneration; and the general belief was, that he was highly favoured of Heaven, and gifted with supernatural power; the life he led was purely religious, with a total disregard of earthly riches.

'The King, Shah Jahan, was a very sensible person, and a great admirer of all that is counted good and excellent in his fellow-men; he was particularly friendly to such men as the Durweish, or others who devoted their lives to religious exercises. He had often heard of Shah ood Dowlah, without ever meeting with him, and on hearing of some singular acts of this Durweish, he was desirous of seeing him, and gave orders accordingly to his Minister, that messengers should be sent in search of the holy man, but as often as they appeared before the Durweish's hut he was invisible; this statement even added to the King's curiosity. On a certain day the King was seated on the story of his palace which overlooked the town and the outskirts beyond the walls, in conversation with his Minister and favourites, when the Durweish was espied at no great distance standing on the broadway; which, when the King knew, he desired messengers might be dispatched to convey the holy man to his presence. "Your royal will shall be obeyed", replied the Minister; "but your Majesty must be aware that the extent of the circuit from the palace to the outer gate is so great that long before a slave can get to that road, Shah ood Dowlah will be beyond the reach of our summons. With all due submission to your Majesty's better judgement, would it not be more prudent to call him from hence, and persuade him to ascend the wall in a basket suspended to a rope." The King agreed, and the Durweish was hailed. "Our King, the Protector of the World, commands Shah ood Dowlah's attendance?"—The Durweish, looking up at the summoner, inquired, "Where is the King?"—"In this apartment," he was answered.—"How am I to get near him? he is too far off: an old man does not well to climb."—"Wait a minute", replied the servant, "your conveyance shall be prepared."

'In a few minutes the basket descended from the upper story, by a strong rope, well secured against the probability of accident. The Durweish,—who was covered with a chudha[12], or sheet, to keep him from giddiness in the ascent,—seated himself firmly in the basket, and the servants drew him up in safety. He was immediately conveyed to the King's apartment; who, contrary to precedent, rose at his entrance to receive this respected and much-desired guest.

'"Pray be seated, my friend", said the King, leading him to the most honoured part of the royal carpet. The Durweish obeyed without a moment's hesitation, to the astonishment of the Vizier, nobles, courtiers, &c., who had never before seen a human being seated in the King's presence, not even one of the most exalted of the nobles. "I have long desired this happiness," said the King to the Durweish, "that I might converse with you. "—"Your Majesty is very gracious to the poor Durweish", was responded. "I hear much of your great virtue and good life," said the King, "from the world, my subjects."—"They do but flatter the poor Durweish," was his reply; adding, "none can tell what passes in my heart, when they view only my face. I am but a poor Durweish."

'"I have many questions to ask you," said the King, "which I hope to have resolved from your own mouth; but, first, I beg to be informed, what methods you have used in order to acquire that command over selfish feelings, which is displayed in your intercourse with the world? and by what means you have become so enlightened in the ways pleasing to God?"

'The Durweish with a smile of pleasure, and in language calm as respectful, answered in the following words:—"Your Majesty, the Protector of the World, was desirous of becoming personally known to the very meanest of your subjects, the poor Durweish; the opportunity arrived, and you condescended to let down a line of rope to assist your poor subject in the ascent to your presence. With equal condescension you have seated me by your side; and I, the poor Durweish, feel a due sense of the honour conferred on me. Had I been anxious to gain admittance to the Protector of the World, many would have been the difficulties to surmount; your castle is well guarded, your gates innumerable to be passed ere this place could be reached, and who would have aided the poor Durweish's wishes? But your Majesty had the will, and the power to effect that will; whilst I, who had neither, might have exerted myself for ages without effect. Such then, O King! is the way God draws those whom He wills unto Him. He sees into the hidden recesses of the human heart, and knows every working of mortal minds; He has no difficulty to surmount; for to whom in His mercy He grants evidence of His love, He draws them to Himself in heart, in soul, in mind, with infinitely less effort than thou hast exerted to draw my mortal body within thy palace. It is God who in love and mercy throws the line to man; happy that soul who accepts the offered means, by which he may ascend!"'

Meer Nizaam ood deen[13] lived many years at Lucknow, where he was much esteemed by the religious men of the time; some who survived him have frequently entertained me with anecdotes of that respected Durweish. Out of the many I have heard detailed by them, I have selected for this place a few of the most interesting:—

A certain King of Delhi (whose name has escaped my recollection) having heard of the remarkable piety of this Durweish, expressed a great desire to see him, and the message was conveyed by a confidential person, instructed to say to the holy man, that his presence was solicited as a favour at Court. The person intrusted with the royal message, remarked to Meer Nizaam, when he had agreed to accompany him, that his mean apparel was not suited to appear in the presence of majesty, and offered to provide him with a superior dress.

The Durweish looked steadily in the face of the proposer, and addressed him, 'Friend! know you not, that clad in these very garments you deride, I make my daily prayers to Him who is the Creator and Lord of the whole earth, and all that therein is? If I am not ashamed to appear in the presence of my God thus habited, canst thou think I shall deem it needful to change my garments for one who is, at best but the creature of my Creator? Thinkest thou I would pay more deference to my fellow-man than I have done to my God? No, no; be assured the clothes I wear will not be changed for earthly visits.'

This Durweish had a mind and heart so entirely devoted to his Creator, and was so thoroughly purified from earthly vanity, that his every wish was granted as soon as it had been formed in his heart, says one of his many admirers, Meer Eloy Bauxh[14]; who, in proof that he was so gifted, relates the following anecdote which I give in his own words:—

'One day I was conversing with the Durweish, Meer Nizaam, when he told me he could bring me to his door, from my own home, at any hour or time he pleased. I was a little wavering in my belief of his power to do so, and offered some remarks that indicated my doubts. "Well," said he in reply, "you shall be convinced, my friend, ere long, I promise you."

'A few evenings after this conversation had been held, I was seated on my charpoy, in meditation,—my usual practice after the evening namaaz,—when a sudden impulse seized my mind, that I must immediately go off to the Durweish who lived at the opposite extremity of this large city (Lucknow). I prepared to set out, and by the time I was ready, the rain burst forth in torrents from the over-charged clouds. Still the impulse was so strong that I cared not for this impediment even, which under ordinary circumstances would have deterred me from venturing out on a dark evening of storm; I wrapped myself up in my labaadah[15], took a stick and umbrella, and sallied forth in great haste. On reaching the outer gate of my premises, the strong, feeling that had impelled me to proceed, vanished from my mind, and I was as strongly urged by an opposite impulse to retire again within my own habitation, where, if I reasoned at all, it was on the unusual changeableness of my fixed resolution, for I never thought about the subject of the Durweish's prediction at the time.

'Some few days after this, I paid Meer Nizaam a visit, and after our usual embrace and salutations were over, he said to me, "Well, my friend, are you convinced by this time, that I have the power to bring you to me whenever I wish, by the preparations you made for coming on the evening of such a day?" (mentioning the time and hour accurately).

'"I remember well my desire to visit you, but why was I deterred from my purpose?" I asked. The Durweish replied, "Out of pure compassion for the fatigue and pains it would have given you, had you come so far on such a night of rain and tempest. My pity for you altered my wishes, and thereby your purposes. I only wished you to be convinced, and perhaps you are so now."'

Meer Eloy Bauxh often speaks of this circumstance, and declares he has full confidence that the Durweish in question possessed the power of influencing the minds of others, or attracting them by his wishes to appear before him.

'This Durweish was once applied to by a Mussulmaun, who went regularly for many days in succession, to watch a favourable moment for soliciting advice and assistance in his then uneasy state of mind. The Mussulmaun's name was Hummoon[16], since designated Shah, a native of the Upper Provinces of Hindoostaun, in the Lahore district. Hummoon occasionally passing near the river, had frequently observed, amongst, the number of

Hindoo women, on their way to and from the place of bathing, one young female whose charms riveted his attention. He sometimes fancied that the girl smiled on him; but aware of the strong prejudices of her caste, which prohibits intercourse even, much less marriage, with men of another persuasion, he loved therefore without hope; yet he could not resist, as the opportunity offered, of again and again watching for a glance at the beautiful Hindoo whose person had won his entire affections. Not a word had ever passed between them, but he fancied she sometimes returned his looks of love in her smiles.

'The passion of Hummoon increased daily; he could with difficulty restrain himself within the prescribed bounds; he longed to address her, and in vain puzzled his imagination for the proper means to adopt, for he knew the edict of her caste had placed a barrier between them of an insurmountable nature. For months he endured all the torments of his perplexing state, and at last resolved on applying to the good Durweish for advice and assistance, whose famed powers had been long the subject of admiration among the Mussulmauns.

Hummoon went daily to the threshold of the Durweish, and seated himself among the many who, like him, had some favour to ask of the holy man, at the propitious moment when he chose to be visible and disposed to look round upon his petitioning visitors. All waited for a look with the most intense anxiety (for a Durweish does not always notice his courtiers), and happy did he deem himself who was encouraged by the recognition of his eye, to offer his petition by word of mouth. Many such applicants had been favoured by the Durweish, yet Hummoon visited daily without being noticed by the holy man. At length, however, a look of inquiry was given to the almost despairing Hummoon; thus encouraged, he folded his hands, and bent them forward in a supplicating attitude, told his distresses as briefly as the subject would permit, and concluded his tale of sorrow, by entreating the Durweish would instruct him in the exercise of some prayer by which he might be made happy with the object of his love.

'The Durweish listened attentively to Hummoon's tale; and more, he pitied him, for he felt at all times a due proportion of sympathy for the misery of his fellow-creatures, and the singularity of Hummoon's case affected him. He told him he could teach the way to become deserving of having his wishes in this world granted to him, but more he could not answer for; but it would take him a considerable time to practise the devotions necessary to his future peace, which were of the heart, not the mere repetition of a prayer by the lips. Hummoon readily assured the Durweish, he was willing to be guided by his advice and instruction; adding, that he would patiently persevere for any length of time necessary, so that at last his object might be accomplished.

'Hummoon commenced under the tuition of the Durweish the practice of devotional exercises. He forsook (as was required of him) all vain pursuits, worldly desires, or selfish gratifications; day and night was devoted to religious study and prayer, and such was the good effect of his perseverance and progressive increase of faith, that at the end of some few months he had entirely left off thinking of the first object of his adoration, his whole heart and soul being absorbed in contemplation of, and devotion to, his Creator. At the end of a year, no trace or remembrance of his old passion existed; he

became a perfect Durweish, retired to a solitary place, where under the shade of trees he would sit alone for days and nights in calm composure, abstracted from every other thought but that of his God, to whom he was now entirely devoted.'

I am told that this Durweish, Hummoon Shah, is still living in the Lahore province, a pattern of all that is excellent in virtue and devotion.

[1] Mir Ilahi Bakhsh.

[2] Shah Sharif-ud-din, Mahmud.

[3] Jame' Masjid, the Congregational mosque.

[4] Faqir, a poor man, one poor in the sight of God.

[5] Pathan, a frontier tribe, many of which reside in British India.

[6] Such a person is called Hafiz.

[7] Maulavi Mir Sayyid Muhammad.

[8] Early in the eighteenth century Farrukhabad, now a district of this name in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, became an independent State during the decay of the Moghul Empire. The line of Nawabs was founded by Muhammad Khan, an Afghan of the Bangash tribe. It was annexed by Oudh in 1749 and ceded to the British in 1801, on which event the Nawab ceased to be independent. The last Nawa b joined the rebels in the mutiny of 1857.

[9] Wilayati Begam, the foreign lady.

[10] See p. 67.

[11] Shah-ud-daula.

[12] *Chadar*.

[13] Mir Nizam-ud-din.

[14] Mir Ilahi Bakhsh.

[15] *Labada*, a rain-coat.

[16] Hamun.

LETTER XXV

Mussulmaun Devotees.—The Chillubdhaars.—Peculiar mode of worship.—Propitiatory offerings.—Supposed to be invulnerable to fire.—The Maadhaars or Duffelees.—Character of the founder.—Pilgrimage to his tomb.—Females afflicted on visiting it.—Effects attributed to the violation of the sanctuary by a foreigner.—Superstition of the Natives.—Anecdote of Sheikh Suddoo and the Genii.—The way of the world exemplified, a Khaunie (Hindoostaunie fable).—Moral fable.—The King who longed for fruit…Page 370

There are many classes of men amongst the Mussulmauns, who either abjure the world or seem to do so, independent of those denominated Durweish;— such us the religions mendicants, &c., who have no earthly calling, and derive their subsistence from the free-will offerings of their neighbours, or the bounty of the rich, who from respect for their humble calling, and a hope of benefit from their prayers, or rather from the veneration of Mussulmauns towards such of their faith as have renounced the world for the service of God.

The Chillubdhaars[1] are a well-known class of wanderers; their founder was a Syaad, Ahmud Kaabeer,[2] of whom many wonderful things are related sufficient to impress on the weak mind a belief in his supernatural ascendancy. His presumed powers are said to have been chiefly instrumental in curing the sick or in removing temporal afflictions; but his effectual prayers in behalf of people in difficulty, they say, surpassed those of any other of the whole tribes of devotees that have at any age existed. His admirers and followers speak of him as having been invulnerable to fire. In his lifetime he had forty disciples or pupils constantly with him; at his death these forty separated, each in the course of time accumulating his forty pupils, after the pattern of their founder, who also eventually became leaders, and so on, until at the present time, it is conjectured, there are few places in Asia exempt from one or more detachments of these Chillubdhaar practical beggars who are much admired by the weak; and although they profess the same tenets and rules of life with their founder, Syaad Ahmud Kaabeer, yet, I believe, no one gives the Chillubdhaars of the present period credit for possessing either the virtues or the power of that man who set them so many bright examples; nevertheless, they are applied to on emergencies by the ignorant and the credulous of the present day, courted by the weak, and tolerated by all.

They all practise one plan whenever called upon to remove the difficulty of any person who places sufficient confidence in their ability. On such occasions, a young heifer, two years old, is supplied by the person having a request to make, after which a fire of charcoal is made in an open space of ground, and the animal sacrificed according to Mussulmaun form. The tender pieces of meat are selected, spitted, and roasted over the fire, of which when cooked, all present are requested to partake. Whilst the meat is roasting, the Chillubdhaars beat time with a small tambourine to a song or dirge expressive of their love and respect to the memory of the departed saint, their founder and patron, and a hymn of praise to the Creator.

The feast concluded, whilst the fire of charcoal retains a lively heat, these devotees commence dancing, still beating their tambourines and calling out with an audible voice, 'There is but one God!—Mahumud is the Prophet of God!' Then they sing in praise of Ali, the descendants of the Prophet, and, lastly, of Syaad Ahmud Kaabeer their beloved saint. Each then puts his naked foot in the fire: some even throw themselves upon it,—their associates taking care to catch them before they are well down,—others jump into the fire and out again instantly; lastly, the whole assembly trample and kick the remaining embers about, whilst a spark remains to be quenched by this means.[3] These efforts, it is pretended, are sufficient to remove the difficulties of the persons supplying the heifer and the charcoal.

These mendicants live on public favour and contributions; they wear clothes, are deemed harmless, never ask alms, but are always willing to accept them, and have no laws of celibacy, as is the case with some wandering beggars in India, who are naked except the wrapper; sometimes they settle, making fresh converts, but many wander from city to city, always finding people disposed to administer to their necessities. They are distinguished from other sects, by each individual carrying a small tambourine, and wearing clothing of a deep buff colour.

There are another set of wandering mendicants, who are called Madhaar[4] beggars, or the Duffelees,[5] by reason of the small hand-drum they carry with them. These are the disciples of the sainted Maadhaar, whose tomb is visited annually by little short of a million of people, men, women, and children, at a place called Muckunpore, about twenty koss from Cawnpore.

Maadhaar was esteemed in his lifetime a most perfect Durweish, and his admirers speak of the power he then possessed as still existing; in that his pure spirit at stated periods hovers near his last earthly remains, where the common people make a sort of pilgrimage to entreat his influence in their behalf. A mayllah[6] (fair) is the consequence of this annual pilgrimage, which continues, I think, seventeen days in succession, and brings together, from many miles distant, the men of business, the weak-minded, and the faithful devotees of every class in the Upper Provinces.

From the respect paid to the memory of Maadhaar, and the expected influence of his spirit at the shrine, the ignorant people bring their sons to receive the saint's blessing on their tender years. The man of business also presents himself before it, desirous to insure a share of success at the fair, and ultimate prosperity at home. The devotee visits the shrine from a desire to increase in true wisdom by the reflected light of the Maadhaar Durweish's purer spirit. Women having made vows to visit the shrine, come to fulfil it at this period, if their hopes be realized in the birth of a son; and others to entreat his influence that their daughters may be suitably married; in short, all who assemble at this mayllah have some prayer to offer, or acknowledgments to make, for they depend on the abundant power and influence of the saint's spirit to supply their several wants or desires.

At the shrine of this saint, a descendant, or as is suspected often in such cases, a pretended relative, takes his station to collect, with all the appearance of sanctity and

humility, the nuzzas offered at the shrine of Maadhaar. The amount so collected is enormous, if credit be given to the reports in circulation; for all visitors are expected to present an offering, and most of the pilgrims do it for conscience sake. I knew a Mussulmaun who went from curiosity to this mayllah; he was accosted rather rudely as he was quitting the tomb, without leaving a nuzza; he told the guardian of the tomb he had presented the best nuzza he possessed, in a prayer for the soul of the departed; (as commanded every Mussulmaun should offer when drawing near the tomb of one of his own faith).

I have conversed with a remarkably devout person, on the numerous extraordinary stories related of Maadhaar's life, and the subsequent influence of his tomb. He told me that women can never, with safety to themselves, enter the mausoleum containing his ashes; they are immediately seized with violent pains as if their whole body was immersed in flames of fire. I spoke rather doubtingly on this subject, upon which he assured me that he had known instances of one or two women who had imprudently defied the danger, and intruded within the mausoleum, when their agony was extreme, and their sufferings for a long time protracted, although they eventually recovered.

Another still more remarkable circumstance has been related to me by the Natives, for the truth of which I cannot venture to vouch, although I have no reason to doubt the veracity of the narrators.

'A party of foreigners, encamped near the fair, wished to see what was going on at this far-famed mayllah, and for the purpose of gratifying their curiosity, halted on a certain day in the vicinity of the Durgah, when the place was much thronged by the various pilgrims to that shrine. The party dined in their tent, but drank more wine than was consistent with propriety, and one was particularly overcome. When they sallied forth, at the close of the day, to visit this saint's tomb, their approach was observed by the keepers, who observing how very unfit the strangers appeared to enter the sanctuary of other men's devotions,—the hallowed ground that was by them respected,—the head-keeper very civilly advanced as they moved towards the entrance, requesting that they would desist from entering in their apparent condition, contrary to the rules of the place and people. The convivial party then drew back, without contesting the point, excepting the one most disguised in liquor, who asserted his right to enter wherever and whenever he thought good, nor would he be controlled by any man in India.

'The keepers spoke very mildly to the tipsy foreigner, and would have persuaded him he was doing wrong, but he was not in a state to listen to any argument dissuading him from his determined purpose; they warned him that a severe punishment must follow his daring, as he pushed past them and reeled into the mausoleum, triumphing at his success. He had approached the tomb, when he was immediately seized with trembling, and sank senseless on the floor; his friends without, observing his situation, advanced and were assisted by the keepers in removing the apparently inanimate body to the open air: water was procured, and after considerable delay, returning symptoms of life were discovered. When able to speak, he declared himself to be on the eve of death, and in a few short hours he breathed his last.' The unhappy man may have died of apoplexy.

The ignorant part of the population of Hindoostaun hold a superstitious belief in the occasional visitations of the spirit of Sheikh Suddoo.[7] It is very common to hear the vulgar people say if any one of their friends is afflicted with melancholy, hypochondria, &c., 'Ay, it is the spirit of Sheikh Suddoo has possessed him.' In such cases the spirit is to be dislodged from the afflicted person by sweetmeats, to be distributed among the poor; to which is added, if possible, the sacrifice of a black goat. I am not quite sure that the night blindness, with which the lower orders of Natives are frequently attacked, has not some superstitious allusion attached to it; but the only remedy I have ever heard prescribed for it is, that the patient should procure the liver of a young kid, which must be grilled over the fire, and eaten by the afflicted person. The story of this Sheikh Suddoo, which is often related in the zeenahnahs of the Mussulmauns, is as follows:—

'Sheikh Suddoo was a very learned man, but a great hypocrite, who passed days and nights in the mosque, and was fed by the charitable, his neighbours, from such viands as they provided daily for the poor traveller, and those men who forsake the world. The Sheikh sometimes wandered into a forest seldom penetrated by the foot of man, where, on a certain day, he discovered a copper cup, curiously engraved with characters which he tried in vain with all his learning to decipher. The Sheikh returned with the cup to the mosque, regretting that the characters were unknown to him; but as he had long desired to have a good-sized lamp, he fancied from the peculiar shape of his prize, that it would answer the very purpose, and the same night he exultingly prepared his charaagh[8] (a light) in the engraved vessel.

'The moment he had ignited one wick, he was surprised by the appearance of a figure, resembling a human being, standing before him, "Who art thou," he demanded, "intruding at this hour on the privacy of a hermit?"—"I come", replied the figure, "on the summons from your lamp. That vessel, and whoever possesses it, has four attendants, one of whom you see before you, your slave. We are Genii, and can only be summoned by the lighting up of the vessel now before you; the number of your slaves will be in due attendance, always guided by as many wicks as it may be your pleasure to light up for our summons. Demand our attendance, at any hour you please, we are bound to obey."

'The Sheikh inquired if he or his companions possessed any power. "Power", replied the Genii, "belongs to God alone, the Creator of all things visible and invisible; but by His permission we are enabled to perform, to a certain extent, any reasonable service our master requires."

'The Sheikh soon put their abilities to the test, and satisfied himself that these agents would aid and assist him in raising his character with the world (for he coveted their praise), "They would", he thought, "assuredly believe he was a pious Durweish, when he could convince them by a ready compliance with their requests, which must seem to follow his prayers, and which he should be able to further now by the aid of the Genii."

'The pretended holy man employed his attendant Genii fully; many of his demands on their services were difficult, and too often revolting to them; yet whilst he retained the lamp in his possession, they were bound to obey his commands. He once heard of a

king's daughter, who was young and beautiful; he therewith summoned the Genii, and required that they should convey the princess to him. They reluctantly obeyed his command, and the princess was the Sheikh's unwilling companion in the mosque. On another occasion, he desired the Genii to bring without delay, to the ground in front of his present abiding place, a very curious mosque situated many leagues distant, the stones of which were so nicely cemented together, that no trace of the joining could be discovered. The Genii received this command with regret, but they were obliged to obey, and departed from the Sheikh's presence to execute his unworthy orders.

'It happened that the mosque which the Sheikh coveted was the retreat of a righteous man, who had separated from the world to serve his God, venerable in years and devout in his duties. The Genii commenced their labour of removing the mosque; the good man who was at his devotions within, fancied an earthquake was shaking the building to its foundation, but as he trusted in God for preservation, he breathed a fervent prayer as he remained prostrate before Him.

'The shaking of the mosque continued, and he was inspired by a sudden thought that induced him to believe some supernatural agency was employed against the holy house; he therefore called out, "Who and what are ye, who thus sacrilegiously disturb the house of God!" The Genii appeared, and made known to what order of beings they belonged, whose servants they were, and the purpose of their mission.

'"Begone this instant!" replied the pious man, with a tone of authority that deprived them of strength: "a moment's delay, and I will pray that you be consumed by fire! Know ye not that this is a mosque, holy, and erected wherein to do service to the great and only God? Would Sheikh Suddoo add to his enormities by forcing the house of God from its foundation? Away, ye servants of the wicked Sheikh, or meet the fire that awaits you by a moment's further delay!"

'The Genii fled in haste to their profane employer, whose rage was unbounded at their disobedience, as he termed their return without the mosque; he raved, stormed, and reviled his slaves in bitter sarcasms, when they, heartily tired of the Sheikh's servitude, caught up the copper vessel, and, in his struggle to resist the Genii, he was thrown with violence on the ground, when his wicked soul was suddenly separated from his most impure body.'

This story receives many alterations and additions, agreeable to the talent and the inclination of the person relating it in Native society; but as there once was a person on whose history it has been founded, they do not denominate it fabulous or khaunie.[9] The following, which I am about to copy from a translation of my husband's, is really a mere fable; and, however trifling and childish it may appear, I feel bound to insert it, as one among those things which serves to illustrate the character of the people I have undertaken to describe; merely adding, that all these fables prove an unceasing entertainment in the zeenahnah, with females who cannot themselves read, either for amusement or instruction:—

'A certain man was travelling on horseback through an immense forest; and when he came to a particular spot, he observed fire consuming some bushes, in the centre of which was a monstrous large snake. The Snake was in danger of being destroyed by the flames, so he called to the Traveller, in a voice of despair—"Oh! good Sahib, save me, or I perish!"[10]

'The Traveller was a very tender-hearted creature, prone to pity the painful sufferings of every living creature, whether man or animal; and therefore began to devise some scheme for liberating the Snake from the devouring flames. His horse's corn bag, which was made of leather, hung dangling by a rope from the crupper; this, he thought, would be the best thing he could offer to the distressed Snake. Accordingly, holding fast by the rope, he threw the bag towards the flames, and desired the Snake to hasten into it, who immediately accepted the offered aid, and the Traveller drew him out of his perilous situation.

'No sooner was the Snake released from danger, than, ungrateful for the services he had received from the Traveller, he sprang towards him, with the purpose of wounding his deliverer. This, however, he failed to accomplish, for the Traveller drew back in time to escape the attack; and demanded of his enemy his reasons for such base ingratitude, saying—"Have I not saved your life by my prompt assistance? What a worthless reptile art thou! Is this thy mode of rewarding benefits?"—"Oh!" said the Snake, "I am only imitating the way of the world; who ever thinks of returning good for good? No, no! every benefit received by the creature of this world is rewarded to the donor by an ungrateful return. I tell you, good Traveller, I am only following the example set me in the way of the world."

'"I shall not take your word for it," said the Traveller in reply; "but if I can be convinced that what you say is true, you shall be welcome to bite me."—"Agreed," said the Snake; and off they set together in search of adventures.

'The first object they met was a large Pepul-tree[11] whose branches spread out an inviting shelter to the weary traveller to repose under, without rent or tax. The Pepul-tree was asked, "Whether it was consistent with the way of the world for the Snake to try to wound the man who had preserved him from destruction."

'The Pepul-tree replied, "To follow in the way of the world, I should say the Snake was justified. A good return is never now-a-days tendered for a benefit received by mere worldlings, as I can bear witness by my own sufferings. Listen to my complaint:—Here in this solitary jungle, where neither hut nor mansion is to be found, I spread forth my well-clothed branches,—a welcome shelter to the passing traveller from the burning heat of the noontide sun, or the deluge poured out from the over-charged cloud;—-under my cover they cook their meal, and my falling leaves supply them with fuel, as also with a bed on which they may recline their weary limbs. Think you, when they have thus profited by the good I have done them, that they are grateful for my services?—Oh, no! the ingrates despoil the symmetry of my form, break off my branches with violence, and

trudge off triumphantly with the spoil which may serve them for fuel for cooking at their next stage. So you see the Snake is right; he has but followed the way of the world."

'The Snake exultingly led the way in search of other proofs by which he should be justified. They fell in with a man who was by occupation a camel-driver. The Man being made acquainted with the point at issue, desired to be heard, as he could prove by his own tale that the Snake's ingratitude was a true picture of the way of the world:—"I was the sole proprietor of a very fine strong camel, by whose labour I earned a handsome competence for each day's provision of myself and family, in conveying goods and sometimes travellers from place to place, as my good fortune served me. On a certain day, returning home through an intricate wood, I drew near to a poor blind man who was seated on the ground lamenting his hard fate. Hearing my camel's feet advance, he redoubled his cries of distress, calling loudly for help and assistance. His piteous cries won upon the tender feelings of my heart; so I drew near to inquire into his situation, he told me with tears and sobs, that he was travelling on foot from his home to visit his relations at the next town; that he had been attacked by robbers, his property taken from him by violence, and that the boy, his guide, was forced from him by the banditti as a slave; and here, added the blind man, must I perish, for I can neither see my way home, nor search for food; in this lone place my friends will never think to seek me, and my body will be the feast for jackals ere the morning dawns.

'"The poor man's story made so deep an impression on my mind, that I resolved on assisting him; accordingly my camel was made to kneel down, I seated the blind man safely on my beast, and set off with him to the city he called his home. Arrived at the city gates, I lowered my camel, and offered to assist the poor man in descending from his seat; but, to my astonishment, he commenced abusing me for my barefaced wickedness, collected a mob around us, by his cries for help from his persecutor, declared himself the master of the camel, and accused me of attempting to rob him now as I had done his brother before.

'"So plausible was his speech—so apparently innocent and just his demands—that the whole collected populace believed I was actually attempting to defraud the blind man of his property, and treated me in consequence with great severity. I demanded to be taken before the Kauzy of the city. 'Yes yes,' said the blind man, 'we will have you before the Kauzy'; and away we went, accompanied by the crowd who had espoused the blind man's cause against me.

'"The blind man preferred his claim, and advocated his own cause with so many arguments of apparent justice, that I was not allowed a voice in the business; and in the end I was sentenced to be thrust out of the city as a thief and vagabond, with a threat of still greater punishment if I dared to return. Here ends my sad tale; and you may judge for yourself, oh, Traveller! how truly the Snake has proved to you that he follows but the way of the world!"

* * * * *

'As they pursued their way in search of further conviction, they met a Fox, whose wisdom and sagacity was consulted on the important question. Having heard the whole history with becoming gravity, the Fox addressed the Traveller:—"You can have no good reason to suppose, Mr. Traveller, that in your case there should be any deviation from the general rule. I have often been obliged to suffer the vilest returns from friends whom I have been active to oblige; but I am rather curious to see the way you effected the release of the Snake from the fire, for I will candidly confess myself so stupid as not clearly to understand the description you have both attempted to give. I shall judge the merits of the case better if I see it performed."

'To this proposal the Snake and Traveller agreed: and when the corn bag was thrown towards the Snake, he crept into it as before. The Fox then called out to the Traveller "Draw quickly!" he did so, and the Snake was caught by a noose in the cord which the Fox had contrived unperceived, by which the Snake was secured fast round the middle. "Now," said the Fox, "bruise your enemy, and thus relieve the world of one base inhabitant!"'[12]

This fable is frequently enlarged and embellished by the reciter to a considerable extent, by introducing many different objects animate and inanimate, to elucidate the question before the Fox arrives, who is generally brought in to moral the fable.

I trust to be excused for transcribing the following moral fable which was translated from the Persian by my husband for my amusement, bearing the title of 'The King who longed for an unknown fruit:'—

'A certain King was so great a tyrant, that his servants and subjects dreaded each burst of anger, as it were the prelude to their own annihilation. The exercise of his will was as absolute as his power; he had only to command, and obedience followed, however difficult or inconvenient to the people who served under him.

'This tyrant dreamed one night that he was eating fruit of an extraordinary flavour and quality. He had never in his whole life seen fruit of the kind, neither had he heard such described by travellers; yet when he ruminated on the subject in the morning he was resolved to have fruit of the same sort his dream presented, or his people should suffer for his disappointment.

'The King related his dream, and with it his commands to his Vizier, his courtiers, and attendants, that fruit of the same description should be brought before him within seven days; in default of which he vowed solemnly that death should be the portion of his Vizier, his courtiers, and servants. They all knew the King meant to be obeyed, by the earnestness of his manner, and they trembled under the weight of his perplexing orders; each, therefore, was speedily engaged in the all-important search. The whole empire was canvassed, and all the business of the Court was suspended to satisfy the whim of the Monarch, without avail; terror and dismay marked the countenance of the whole city—for certain death awaited these servants of the Court—and there was but now one day left

to their hopes. The city, the suburbs, the provinces, had been searched; disappointment followed from every quarter, and the threatened party gave up their hearts to despair.

'A certain Durweish, knowing the consternation of the people, and feeling pity for their unmerited sufferings, sent for the Vizier privately. "I am not", said the Durweish, "by any means anxious to please the vanity and silly wishes of your master, the King, but I do hear with pity the state of despair you and your fellows are reduced to, by the unsuccessful results of your search after the fruit, and the certain consequences which are to follow your failure."

'Then giving the Vizier a fragment of a broken pitcher, on which was ciphered unknown characters, he told him to take it with him to a certain tomb, situated in the suburbs of the royal city, (directing him to the spot with great exactness), and casting the fragment on the tomb, to follow the directions he would there receive; he further desired him to be secret, to go alone, and at midnight.

'The now hope-inspired Vizier went as desired at midnight, and cast the fragment on the tomb, which instantly opened to him. He then descended a flight of steps, from the foot of which, at a little distance, he first espied a light not larger than a taper, but which increased as he went on until the full splendour of noonday succeeded. Proceeding with confidence, revived hope cheered his heart, anticipating that by success so many lives besides his own would be preserved through his humble endeavours; and that life would be more than doubly dear, as the prospect of losing the gift had embittered the last few days so severely.

'The Vizier passed on courageously through halls, corridors, and apartments of magnificent structure, decorated and furnished in the most perfect style of elegant neatness. Everything he saw bore marks of splendour. The King's palace was then remembered in all its costliness, to be as much inferior to the present scene as could be detected by the lapidary's correct eye, when comparing the diamond with the pebble.

'He was perfectly entranced as he gazed on the emerald gate, through which he had to pass to enter a garden of luxuriant beauty, where every shrub, plant, flower, and fruit teemed with richness. In the centre of a walk an old man was seated in a chair of burnished gold, clad in the costume of the country, who seemed to be engaged in breathing the sweet odours by which he was surrounded with a calm and tranquil countenance of joy. "I know your business," said the possessor of this paradise, to the Vizier as he advanced towards him; "you are come to obtain fruit from this tree, which bows its branches to the earth with the weight and number of its burden. Take one only; this is the fruit your master's dream pictured to his fancy."

'Full of joy at the prospect of release from the dreaded anger of his royal master, the Vizier hastily plucked the fruit, and retreated by the way he came, without waiting to inquire what the old man meant by an exclamation he uttered at parting, which at the time seemed of lesser import than he afterwards imagined; but "Alas, the world" was recalled to his memory on his way back to the palace, and haunted his mind so strongly that he

became restless and uneasy, even after the King had conferred honours and favours innumerable on him for his successful efforts in procuring that fruit which had never before been seen by any creature on earth but by the King, and by him only in a dream. "Alas, the world!" was like a dark envelope over every attempt to be cheerful; an impenetrable cloud seemed to pervade the Vizier's mind; he could think of nothing but the parting words of the old man, and his own folly in not inquiring his meaning.

'The Vizier at last went to the same Durweish who had befriended him in his hour of need, and related to him the obstacle to his enjoyment of the blessings and honours which had crowned his success, and hoped from this holy-minded man to ascertain the meaning of that perplexing sentence, "Alas, the world!" The Durweish could not, or would not explain the old man's meaning; but willing to do the Vizier all possible service, he proposed giving him again the necessary passport to the inhabitant of the garden.

'The fragment of a pitcher was again traced with the mystic characters, and with this in his hand the Vizier at midnight sought the tomb, where he found as easy access as on the former occasion. Everything he saw seemed doubly beautiful to his imagination since his former visit. He entered by the emerald gate and found the old man enjoying the magnificent and sense-devouring scene, with as much delight as mortals are wont to show when content fills the heart of man.

'"I know your second errand, my friend," said the old man, "and am quite as willing to oblige you as on your first visit. Know then, Vizier, that whilst an inhabitant of earth, I followed the humble occupation of a village barber; by shaving and paring nails I earned my daily bread, and maintained my family. Sometimes I collected ten pice in my day of labour from house to house, and if twelve crowned my efforts I was fortunate.

'"Many years passed over my head in this way, when one day I was less successful in my calling, and but half my usual earnings was all I had gained. On my way home I was ruminating on the scantiness of the meal likely to be procured by five pice for my family of seven people; the season was one of such great scarcity, that ten pice on other days had been of late barely sufficient to procure our daily food; and even with twelve we thought our wants had been but inadequately supplied. I went on grieving,—more for my family than myself, it is true,—and could have cried at the thought of the small portion of bread and dhall I should see allotted to each individual dependant on me.

'"In my progress towards home, whilst regretting my poverty, I saw an unfortunate beggar, whose earnest entreaty seemed to make no impression on those who passed him by; for, in truth, when money is scarce and corn dear, people's hearts grow somewhat cold to the distresses of those who have no claim by kindred ties. But with me it was otherways: my scantiness seemed to make me more tender to the sorrows of my fellow-creatures. Poor soul, said I to myself, thou art starving, and no one gives ear to thy complaints; now if I take home this scanty produce of my day's labour, it will not give a meal to all my household; besides, they dined with me tolerably well yesterday. We shall not starve by one day's fasting; to-morrow Divine Providence may send me in the way of

more bearded men than I have met to-day. I am resolved this poor man shall have the benefit of a good meal for once, which he supplicates for in the name of God.

'"I then went to the beggar and threw the five pice into his upheld wrapper. 'There, brother,' said I, 'it is all I have; go, make yourself happy in a good meal, and remember me in your prayers.' 'May Heaven give you plenty in this world and bless your soul in the next!' was his only response. That prayer was heard, for during my further sojourn on earth abundance crowned my board; and here, it is unnecessary to remark on the bounties by which you perceive I am surrounded.

'"That I said *Alas, the world!* was from the reflection that I did but one act of real charity whilst I remained in it, and see what an abundance rewards me here. Had I known how such things are rewarded hereafter, I should have been more careful to have embraced the passing opportunities, while I walked with my fellow-man on earth. That I said, *Alas, the world*! to you, was an intended admonition to mankind; to convince them of the blessings bestowed in this world of bliss eternal, in reward for every proper use to which the benefits they received in their probationary state of existence may have been devoted. Go, friend! and profit by the example I present of heavenly rewards! Persevere in a course of practical charity in that world you still inhabit; and secure, whilst you may, the blessed rewards of eternity!"'

[1] This term does not appear in the ordinary dictionaries or Census reports. Sir C. Lyall, with much probability, suggests that the correct form is Chalapdar, 'a cymbal player'.

[2] A saint, Sayyid Ahmad Kabir, is buried at Bijaimandil, Delhi. T.W. Beale, *Oriental Biographical Dictionary, s.v.*

[3] Fire-walking is practised by many Musalman devotees. In a case recorded on the NW. frontier, a fakir and other persons walked through a fire-trench and showed no signs of injury; others came out with blistered feet and were jeered at as unorthodox Musalmans; a young Sikh, shouting his Sikh battle-cry, performed the feat, and as he escaped uninjured, a riot was with difficulty prevented.—T.L. Pennell, *Among the Wild Tribes of the Afghan Frontier*, 1909, p. 37, See M.L. Dames, 'Ordeals by Fire in the Punjab' (*Journal Anthropological Society, Bombay*, vol. iv). The subject is fully discussed by Sir J. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*[3], part vii, vol. ii, 1913, pp. 5 ff.

[4] Madari fakirs, who take their names from Badi-ud-din Madar Shah, a disciple of Shaikh Muhammad Taifuri Bastami, who died A.D. 1434 at the ago of 124 years, and is buried at Makanpur in the Cawnpur District, where an annual fair is held at his tomb. On the anniversary of his death food is offered here, and amulets *(baddhi)* are hung round the necks of children. Some light a charcoal fire, sprinkle ground sandalwood on it, and jumping into it, tread out the embers with their feet, shouting out *dam Madar*, 'by the breath of Madar!' the phrase being regarded as a charm against snake-bite and scorpion stings. After the fire-walk the feet of the performers are washed and are found to be uninjured. Others vow a black cow, sacrifice it, and distribute the meat to beggars. The

rite is of Hindu origin, and Hindus believe that the saint is an incarnation of their god Lakshmana.—Jaffur Sharreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, 158 f.: W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the NW. P. and Oudh*, iii. 397 ff.

[5] Dafali, from *daf*, a drum.

[6] *Mela*.

[7] Shaikh Saddu is the special saint of women. His name was Muhi-ud-din, and he lived at Amroha or Sambhal, in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Some unorthodox Musalmans offer food in the name, and hold a session, in which a female devotee becomes possessed. A woman who wants a child says to her: 'Lady! I offer my life to you that I may have a child', whereupon the devotee gives her betel which she has chewed, or sweets, and this is supposed to bring about the desired result (Jaffur Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, 184 f: W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, i. 204). In Bihar it is said that he had a lamp with four wicks, on lighting which, four Jinns appeared, and he used them for the purpose of debauchery. Finally, another Jinn slew him. People become possessed in his name, and when summoned in cases of illness or trouble, announce that a goat or a cock must be sacrificed to the saint (*Census Report, Bengal*, 1901, i. 180).

[8] *Chiragh*, an earthenware cup in which a wick is lighted.

[9] *Kahani*, a folk-tale.

[10] This tale comes from the Nala-Damayanti Saga. Nala finds a snake in danger of death from a jungle fire, saves it, and is bitten by the reptile, in the forehead, which causes him to become weak, deformed, and black in colour. The snake turns out to be the King Snake, Karkotaka. He says to Nala: 'I gave you this bite for your good, as you will soon learn, in order that your deformity may conceal you in carrying out your plans' (C.H. Tawney, *Katha-saral-Sagara*, i. 564 f.: C.H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas*, 149 ff.).

[11] *Pipal, Ficus religiosa*.

[12] A common Indian folk-tale. In one of the most common versions the jackal tricks the ungrateful tiger, and induces him to go back to his cage.

LETTER XXVI

Superstition of the Natives.—Fair annually kept by Hindoos.—Supposed practice of witchcraft by an old woman.—Assaulted by an infuriated populace.—Rescued by a Native gentleman.—He inquires their reasons for persecuting her.—Is instrumental

in appeasing their malignity.—Endeavours to remove their prejudice.—Proneness of Asiatics to superstition.—Opinion of a Mussulmaun on the influence of evil spirits.—Account of a woman possessed by an evil spirit.—Dialogue with her during the paroxysms of her affliction.—Means used for her recovery.—Further allusions to the false notions of the Natives respecting supernatural agency…Page 387

All the Natives of Hindoostaun appear to me to be, more or less, tinctured with superstitious notions, which, in many instances, are so grafted in their nature as to resist every attempt made to root out by arguments the folly of this great weakness.

I hope to be forgiven for introducing in this Letter a few anecdotes and occurrences, which may illustrate that faulty side of the character of a people who have not derived those advantages which are calculated to displace superstition from the mind of man;—in a word, they are strangers to that Holy volume which teaches better things.

A fair had been held at Lucknow one afternoon, not immediately within our view, but the holiday folks passed our house on the road to and from the scene of action. This fair or mayllah is visited by all ranks and classes of Natives; but it is strictly a Hindoo festival annually kept up in remembrance of the celebrated Kornea,[1] of Hindoo mythologic celebrity, who according to their tradition, when but a child, on a certain day killed with his slender arm a great tyrant, the giant Khaunce. Had there ever existed a suspicion that the Hindoos sprang from any of the tribes of Israel, I should have imagined the event they celebrate might have reference to the act of David, who with his single arm destroyed Goliath of Gath. This, however, can hardly be supposed, although the similarity is remarkably striking.

The figure of Khaunce is made up of bamboo and paper, representing a human being of gigantic stature, and bearing a most fierce countenance, with some certain appendages, as horns, tail, &c., to render the figure more disgusting. It is placed near the bank of the river Goomtie, in a conspicuous situation, for the wonder and admiration of some, the terror of the weak, and the satisfaction of the believers in the fabled story of Kornea and his supposed supernatural power.

Kornea is represented by a little boy, dressed in costly apparel, who is conveyed in grand procession, seated on an elephant, and surrounded by attendants on horseback, with bands of music and a multitude of followers, through the principal streets of the city to the chosen spot where Khaunce is placed to be attacked by the child.

When the farce is properly prepared for the attack, the child, I am told,—for I have never seen the ceremony,—takes aim from his well-ornamented bow, and with a single arrow sends the monstrous giant into the river, whilst the shouts of the multitude declare the victory of Kornea, and the destruction of the enemy to the repose of mankind. The figure, I should have remarked, is made up of parts merely placed on each other, so that the force of an arrow is sufficient to dislodge the lofty erection as readily as a pack of cards in a

mimic castle may be levelled by a breath. The mayllah concludes when the floating members of the figure have glided with the stream out of sight.

A party of poor weak-minded mortals, pedestrians, but by their dress respectable people, returning from this day's mayllah when the evening was well advanced, suddenly halted near my house; my attention was soon aroused by violent screams, and exclamations of 'Seize her! seize her! she is eating my heart!' accompanied by all those indications of fear and pain, that did not fail to excite my sympathy; for I could not comprehend what was the matter and imagined the poor man had been wounded by the hand of an assassin.

A crowd quickly assembled, and a great bustle ensued; I was really alarmed, and the tumult of voices continuing for some minutes, we distinctly heard the loud cries of a coarse female voice who seemed to be in great danger of losing her life by the rough treatment of a lawless rabble; this induced a Native gentleman of our family to venture out, to ascertain if possible the cause of the excitement, and also to endeavour to assuage the angry feelings of the turbulent party. His appearance amongst them produced the desired effect, they were silenced by his command; and when the man whose alarming screams had first assailed us, was brought before him, he found that he was a man of great respectability amongst the shop-keepers of the city, with a child of four years old in his arms, or rather I should say the child was seated astride on his father's hip, the arm encircling the child's body, as is the general manner of nursing amongst all classes of the Natives.

On being questioned as to the cause of his raising the tumult, he declared that he was walking quietly on the roadway with his party, when the old woman (who was in custody) had touched him as he passed, when immediately his heart sickened, and he was sensible she had bewitched him, for she was still devouring his heart and feasting on his vitals.[2] 'I will certainly kill her!' he added, 'if she does not restore me to myself and my child likewise!'—'When was your child attacked?'—'About four days since,' answered the angry father.

'Good man!' replied my friend; 'you must be under the influence of delusion, since you told me just now, the woman is a stranger to you, and that you never saw her before; how could she have bewitched your child then four days ago? I am sure weakening fears or illness has taken possession of your better feelings; the poor creature looks not like one who possesses the power you ascribe to her.'

The old woman threw herself at the feet of my friend, and implored his protection, reiterating her gratitude to him as her preserver from the fury of an angry populace, who had already beaten her with slippers on her head, as a prelude to their future harsh intentions towards her. She stretched out her hands to touch him and bless him, as is the custom with the lower orders of women to their superior of either sex, but the multitude insisted she should not be allowed to let her unhallowed hands fall on the good Mussulmaun gentleman; in a second was to be heard the invocations of Hindoos and Mussulmauns, on their several sources of supreme aid, to save the gentleman from her power, for all the mob felt persuaded the old woman was a witch.

'Be assured you are mistaken, I, at least, have no fears that her touch can harm me;' responded my friend. 'Exercise your reason—is she not a human being like ourselves? True she is old and ugly, but you are really wicked in accusing and ill-treating the poor wretch.' They were silenced for a few minutes, then declared she must be a witch, for her feet were crooked, she was desired to exhibit them, and they were found to be perfectly good straight feet.

My friend inquired of the old woman who she was; she answered, 'A poor mazoorie[3] (corn-grinder), my husband and my sons are grass-cutters, our abode is in the serai (inn for travellers), we are poor, but honest people.' 'You see, Sir,' said my friend to the accusing person, 'your own weak fears have imposed upon your mind. This woman cannot have done you any injury; let her depart quietly to her home without farther annoyance.'

'No!' replied the accuser, 'she must satisfy me she is not a witch, or worse than that, by allowing me to pluck a few hairs from her head.'—' What benefit do you propose to yourself by this measure?'—'Why I shall relieve myself from her power over me, by possessing hairs plucked from her head, on which my friends will exercise certain prayers, and thus the craft she has used to bewitch me will be dissolved, and I shall be restored to myself again.'[4]

Willing as my friend was to get the poor woman released from the hands of the accusing party, and finding reason or argument of no avail in turning them from their purpose to detain her, the terms were acceded to on the one part, provided the woman herself was willing to comply, to which, when she was asked, she replied, 'I am not the wretched creature my accuser imagines, and therefore can have no objection, on condition that I may be allowed afterwards to return to my home in peace.'

The poor old head was now in danger of being plucked of its white hairs by the surrounding crowd, whose extravagant desire to possess the, to them, invaluable specific against witchcraft—for they still believed she was actually a witch—led them to overlook humanity and feeling; but the peacemaker's voice was again heard, commanding the crowd to desist, and they should all be gratified, when the scissors he had sent a servant to fetch, might enable them to possess the prize without inflicting pain on the poor persecuted woman.

Whilst this was in agitation, and before the scissors were used, several well-armed soldiers, attracted by the appearance of a riot, had made their way to the scene of contention, who recognizing the old woman as the mother and wife of their three grass-cutters, immediately took the poor old soul under their protection, and conveyed her safely from her tormentors. My friend was very well satisfied to resign his charge to their guardianship, and not a little pleased that he had been instrumental in preserving a fellow-creature from the lawless hands of the foolishly superstitious of his countrymen.

It is lamentable to witness how powerful an ascendancy superstition sways over the minds of Asiatics generally. The very wisest, most learned, most religious, even, are

more or less tinctured with this weakness; and, I may add, that I have hardly met with one person entirely free from the opinion that witchcraft and evil agency are in the hands of some, and often permitted to be exercised on their neighbours. The truly religious people declare to me, that they only are preserved from such calamities who can place their whole reliance on the power and goodness of God alone; Who, they are persuaded, will never suffer His faithful servants to be persecuted by the evil one in any shape, or under any mysterious agency. Perfect dependance on Divine Providence is the Mussulmaun's only safeguard, for they declare it to be their belief that evil agency exists still, as it did in the first ages of the world. Faith and trust in God can alone preserve them; when that fails, or if they have never learned to rely on Him for protection, they are necessarily exposed to the influence of that evil agency by which so many have suffered both in body and soul amongst their country-people.

The return of our friend, with the explanation of the scene I had witnessed from my window, led me to inquire very minutely into the opinion and general belief of the Mussulmauns on such subjects. A sensible, clever gentleman of that persuasion then present, told me that there could be no doubt witchcraft was often practised in Lucknow, detailing things he had often heard, about the wicked amongst human beings who practised muntah[5] (incantations); and perhaps would have explained the motives and the acquired power if I had been disposed to listen. I inquired of my friend, as he had always appeared a religious person, whether he really believed in magic, genii, evil agency, &c. He told me, that he did believe certainly that such things still existed; but he added, 'such power can only work on the weak or the wicked, for that heart whose dependance is wholly fixed on God, has a sure protection from every evil, whether of man or spirit. You have in your sacred book a full and ample delineation of the works of magic, in the period of Moses, and also of Saul. In later periods you have proofs of greater weight with you, where Christ cast out devils and gave the same power to His disciples. My opinion,' he added, 'will not alter yours, nor do I wish it; neither would I argue or dispute with you on subjects become obsolete in the enlightened world of which you are a member, but as far as my own individual opinion is concerned, it is my belief that all things are possible to the Almighty power and will of God. And I see no right we have either to inquire why, or to dispute about the motives by which His wisdom permits the weak to be afflicted for a season, or the wicked to be punished in this life.'

I inquired if he had ever witnessed any of the strange events I continually heard his people speak of, as having occurred in their neighbourhood, such as people possessed with unclean spirits, sufficient to confirm his belief in their probability. He replied, 'I have not only witnessed but have, under Divine Providence, been the instrument to convey relief to several different women, who suffered from being possessed by evil spirits.' He then related the following, which I copy from the notes I took at the time of his relation:—

'When I was a very young man, my mind was bent on inquiring into the truth of the generally believed opinion, that some righteous men of our faith had power granted to them to remove evil spirits from their victims. I took the advice of a certain venerable person, who was willing to impart his knowledge to me. Preparatory to my own practice,

I was instructed to forsake the haunts of man, and give myself wholly to prayer. Accordingly I absented myself from my home, family, and friends, and led the life you would call a hermit's; my food was simply herbs and fruits, and occasionally an unleavened cake of my own preparing, whilst the nearest tank of water supplied me with the only beverage I required; my clothing a single wrapper of calico; my house a solitary chupha (a thatch of coarse grass tied over a frame of bamboo), and this placed on the margin of a wood, where seldom the feet of man strayed to interfere with, or disturb my devotion. My days and nights were given to earnest prayer; seeking God and offering praises with my mouth to Him, constituted my business and my delight for nearly two whole years, during which time my friends had sought me in vain, and many a tear I fear was shed at the uncertain fate of one they loved so well in my father's house.'

'The simplicity of my mode of life, added to the veneration and respect always paid to the Durweish's character, raised me in the opinion of the few who from time to time had intruded on my privacy, to ask some boon within my limits to give as a taawise[6] (talisman), which is in fact a prayer, or else one of the names or attributes of God, in such a character as best suited the service they required; for you must be told, in the Mussulmaun faith, we count ninety-nine different names or titles to the great merciful Creator and only true God. In many cases the taawise I had so given, had been supposed by the party receiving them, to have been instrumental in drawing down upon them the favour of God, and thus having their difficulties removed; this induced others influenced by their report, to apply to me, and at last my retirement was no longer the hermit's cell, but thronged as the courtyard of a king's palace. My own family in this way discovered my retreat, they urged and prevailed on me to return amongst them, and by degrees to give up my abstemious course of life.

'The fame of my devotion, however, was soon conveyed to the world; it was a task to shake off the entreaties of my poor fellow-mortals who gave me more credit for holiness of life than I felt myself deserving of. Yet sympathy prevailed on me to comfort when I could, although I never dared to think myself deserving the implicit confidence they placed in me.

'On one occasion I was induced, at the urgent entreaties of an old and valued friend, to try the effects of my acquired knowledge in favour of a respectable female, whose family, and her husband in particular, were in great distress at the violence of her sufferings. They fancied she was troubled by a demon, who visited her regularly every eighth day; her ravings when so possessed endangered her health, and destroyed the domestic harmony of the house.

'The day was fixed for my visit, and the first exercise of my acquirements; even then I had doubts on my mind whether the demons so often quoted did really exist, or were but the disordered wanderings of imagination; and if they did exist, I still was doubtful as to the extent of my knowledge being sufficient to enable me to be the instrument for effecting the desired benefit. Trusting faithfully, however, in God's help, and desiring nothing but His glory, I commenced my operations. The woman was seated on a charpoy (bedstead) behind a wadded curtain, which hid her from my view. Respectable females,

you are aware, are not allowed to be seen by any males except very near relatives. I took my seat opposite the curtain with the husband of the suffering woman, and entered into conversation with him on general subjects.

'I soon heard the wild speeches of the woman, and my heart fully sympathized in her sufferings. After preparing the sweet-scented flowers for my purpose (it is believed all aerial beings feed on the scent of flowers), fire was brought in a chafing-dish, at my request, and a copper plate was placed on this fire, on which I strewed my prepared flowers mixed up with drugs. Instantly the demon became furious in the woman, calling out to me, "Spare me! spare me!"

'I should remark that the woman was so entirely hidden by the curtain as to leave it beyond a doubt that she could not see what I was doing on the other side, but she seemed, by the instinct of the evil spirit which possessed her, to be thoroughly acquainted with the nature of my visit, and the exertion I was making by prayer, for her release from the intruder. The women attending her, her friends and relatives, had no power to restrain her in the violence of her paroxysms; she tore the curtain with more than human force, and it gave way, leaving her and the other women exposed to my gaze.

'I would, from modesty, have retired, but her husband, having confidence in my ability to help his afflicted wife, whom he loved most tenderly, entreated me not to retire, but to think of the woman as my own sister. The woman, or rather the demon in the woman, told me what I was going to do was not withheld from her knowledge, desiring me immediately to leave the place.

'"Who are you?" I inquired.—"I am the spirit of an old woman, who once inhabited this house;" was answered by a coarse harsh voice.—"Why have you dared to possess yourself of this poor female? she never could have done you any injury."—"No," was answered, "not the female, but her husband has taken possession of this house, and I am here to torment him for it, by visiting his wife."

'"Do you know that I am permitted to have power to destroy you in this fire?"—"Yes, but I hope you will shew mercy; let me escape and I will flee to the forest."—"I cannot agree to this, you would then, being at liberty, fasten yourself on some other poor mortal, who may not find one to release him from your tyranny; I shall destroy you now;" and I was actually preparing my methods for this purpose, when the screaming became so violent, the poor woman's agony so terrific, that I dreaded her instant death from the present agony of her ravings.

'"How am I to know you are what you represent yourself to be?" said I, trying the softest manner of speech; (the poor victim appeared at ease immediately).—"Ask me any question you please," was replied, apparently by the woman, "and I will answer you." I rose and went into the front entrance of the house, which is divided from the zeenahnah by a high wall, as are all our Mussulmaun houses, and returned with something closely concealed in my hand. I asked, "What is enclosed in my clenched hand?"—"A piece of charcoal," was the prompt reply. It was so in truth; I could no longer doubt.

'Another of the party was sent to the outer house; and, again I inquired, "What is in this person's hand?"—"Grains of corn."—"Of what nature?"—"Wheat." The hand was opened, and the contents were really as was said;—confirming to all present, if they had ever doubted, that the poor woman was possessed by the demon, as I have before represented. Nearly two hours were spent in the most singular conversations, which, whilst they amused me exceedingly, convinced me by my own observations of the truth of that which I had but imperfectly believed before these trials.

'"I will certainly destroy you in this fire, unless you give me ample assurances that you will never again annoy or torment this poor inoffensive woman;" and, as I presented my preparation, the screams, the cries of "Spare me! oh, spare me this fiery torment!" were repeated with redoubled force. I asked, "What is your belief?"—"I believe in one God, the Creator of all things;" was promptly answered.—"Then away to the forest, the boon you first craved from me, nor again venture to return to this house."

'The instant my command was given, the woman was calm, her reason restored immediately; her shame and confusion were beyond expressing by words, as she awoke from what she termed a dream of heavy terror that had overpowered her. The appearance of a strange man,—herself but half clad, for in the moments of raving she had torn off parts of her clothing, leaving the upper part of her person entirely uncovered—nearly deprived her again of returning reason; her husband's presence, however, soothed her mind; but it was some time before her confusion was sufficiently banished to enable her to converse freely with me. In answer to the questions I asked of her, she replied that she had not the least recollection of what had occurred. She fancied herself overpowered by a dreadful dream which had agitated her greatly, though she could not recollect what was the nature of that dream. I ordered some cooling beverage to be prepared for my patient, and recommending rest and quiet, took my leave, promising to visit her again in my professional character, should any return of the calamity render my visit necessary. The whole family heaped blessings and prayers on my head for the benefit they believed I had been the instrument of Providence in rendering to their house.

'This was my first attempt at the practice I had been instructed in; and, you may believe, I was gratified with the success with which my endeavours had been crowned. For several months the lady continued quite well, when some symptoms of irritability of temper and absence of mind warned her husband and family of approaching danger upon which, they urged and entreated my second visit. I went accompanied by several friends who were curious to witness the effect expected to be produced by my prayer. It appeared the poor woman was more calm on my first entrance, than when *I* had previously visited her; but after repeating my form of prayer, the most violent ravings followed every question I put to her.

'Many hours were spent in this way. The replies to my questions were remarkable; she always answered, as if by the spirit with which she was possessed. I demanded, "Why have you dared to return to this poor creature? do you doubt my ability to destroy you?" The reply was, "had no power to fix myself again on the woman, until you entered the house, but I have hovered over her."—I said, "I do not believe that you are the soul of a

deceased old woman as you represent yourself to be; perhaps you may wish to convince me, by answering the questions that will be made by me and my friends." The several questions were then put and answered in a way that surprised all present.

Afterwards, I said, "You professed when here on a former occasion, to believe in God. Answer me now, to what sect of people did you belong?"—"Sheikh," was the reply, "and I believe in one God of mercy and of truth,"'—"Then you are my brother,'" I said, rising, and holding out my hand to the woman, "we will shake hands."—-"No, No!" replied the woman, with great agitation and terror, "I beseech you not to touch me; the fire which I dread would then torment me more than I could bear. I would willingly shake hands with all here present, that would give me no pain, but with you the case is different; one touch of yours would destroy me immediately. Not to prolong my story, at the husband's earnest entreaty, the evil soul was destroyed by the practice I had learned, and the poor woman, restored to health and peace, was no more troubled by her enemy."

When this story was related, I fancied it a mere fable of the relator's brain to amuse his audience; but on a more intimate acquaintance with him, I find it to be his real opinion that he had been instrumental in the way described, in removing evil spirits from the possessed; nor could I ever shake his confidence by any argument brought forward for that purpose during many years of intimate acquaintance; which is the more to be regretted as in all other respects he possesses a very superior and intelligent mind, and as far as *I* could judge of his heart by his life, always appeared to be a really devout servant of God.

It is not surprising that the strongly grounded persuasion should be too deeply rooted to give way to my feeble efforts; time, but more especially the mercy of Divine goodness extended to them, will dissolve the delusion they are as yet fast bound by, as it has in more enlightened countries, where superstition once controlled both the ignorant and the scholar, in nearly as great a degree as it is evident it does at this day the people of India generally. Here the enlightened and the unenlightened are so strongly persuaded of the influence of supernatural evil agency, that if any one is afflicted with fits, it is affirmed by the lookers on, of whatever degree, that the sick person is possessed by an unclean spirit.

If any one is taken suddenly ill, and the doctor cannot discover the complaint, the opinion is that some evil spirit has visited the patient, and the holy men of the city are then applied to, who by prayer may draw down relief for the beloved and suffering object. Hence arises the number of applications to the holy men for a written prayer, called taawise (talisman) which the people of that faith declare will not only preserve the wearer from the attacks of unclean spirits, genii, &c., but these prayers will oblige such spirits to quit the afflicted immediately on their being placed on the person. The children are armed from their birth with talismans; and if any one should have the temerity to laugh at the practice, he would be judged by these superstitious people as worse than a heathen.

[1] Kanhaiya, a name of the demigod Krishna, whom Kansa, the wicked King of Mathura, tried to destroy. For the miracle-play of the destruction of Kansa by Krishna and his brother Balarama, see Prof. W. Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy*, 140, 157, 190. The author seems to refer to the Ramlila festival.

[2] For cases of witches sucking out the vitals of their victims, see W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of N. India*, ii. 268 ff.

[3] *Mazdurni*, a day labourer.

[4] On the efficacy of shaving or plucking out hair from a witch in order to make her incapable of bewitching people, see W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of N. India*[2], ii. 250 f.

[5] *Mantra*.

[6] *Ta'wiz*, see p. 214.

LETTER XXVII

Memoir of the life of Meer Hadjee Shah.—His descent.—Anecdote of a youthful exploit.—His predilection for the army.—Leaves his home to join the army of a neighbouring Rajah.—Adventures on the way.—Is favourably received and fostered by the Rajah.—His first pilgrimage to Mecca.—Occurrences during his stay in Arabia.—Description of a tiger-hunt.—Detail of events during his subsequent pilgrimages.—The plague.—Seizure by pirates.—Sketch of the life of Fatima, an Arabian lady.—Relieved from slavery by Meer Hadjee Shah.—He marries her.—Observations on the piety of his life.—Concluding remarks…Page 400

The name of Meer Hadjee Shah has so often occurred in my Letters, that I feel persuaded a brief sketch of his life may be acceptable here, more particularly as that venerated man presented to my immediate observation a correct picture of the true Mussulmaun. I can only regret my inability to do justice to the bright character of my revered father-in-law, whose conduct as a devout and obedient servant to his Maker, ruled his actions in every situation of life, and to whom my debt of gratitude is boundless, not alone for the affectionate solicitude invariably manifested for my temporal comforts, but for an example of holy living, which influences more than precept. This much valued friend of mine was the mouth of wisdom to all with whom he conversed, for even when intending to amuse by anecdotes, of which his fund was inexhaustible, there was always a moral and religious precept attached to the relation, by which to benefit his auditor, whilst he riveted attention by his gentle manners and well-selected form of words.

Before we met, I had often heard him described by his dutiful son, but with all that affection had prompted him to say of his father, I was not prepared to expect the dignified person I found him,—a perfect model of the patriarchs of old to my imagination, nor could I ever look at him through our years of intimacy, without associating him in my mind with Abraham, the father of his people.

His form was finely moulded, his height above six feet, his person erect, even in age, his fine cast of countenance beamed with benevolence and piety, and his dark eye either filled with tears of sympathy or brightening with joy, expressed both superior intelligence and intensity of feeling. His venerable flowing beard gave a commanding majesty to the figure before me, whilst his manners were graceful as the most polished even of European society. Raising his full eyes in pious thankfulness to God (whose mercy had thus filled his cup of earthly happiness to the brim), he embraced us both with a warmth of pressure to his throbbing heart, that pronounced more than his words, the sincerity of our welcome. Never have I forgotten the moment of our meeting. The first impression lasted through our long acquaintance, for he proved indeed a real solace during my pilgrimage in a strange land.

The subject of my present Letter, Meer Mahumud Hadjee Shah, was a native of Loodeeanah,[1] the capital city of the Punjaab territory, so called from the five rivers which water that tract of country, and derived from punje (five), aab (water). He descended through a long line of pure Syaad blood, from Mahumud, many of his ancestors having been remarkable for their holy lives, and his grandsire in particular, a singularly devout Durweish, of whom are related in the family many interesting incidents and extraordinary escapes from peril which distinguished him as a highly-favoured mortal. On one occasion, when attacked by a ravenous tiger, his single blow with a sabre severed the head from the carcase: the sabre is still retained in the family with veneration, as the instrument by which the power and goodness of God was manifested to their sire.

The father of Meer Hadjee Shah was a Kauzy (Judge) of the city of Loodeeanah, a man greatly admired for his extensive knowledge of the Mahumudan law, respected for his general worthiness, and venerated for his holy life. He had a large family, of whom the subject before me was the eldest son; his father designed to instruct and prepare him as his successor in the same honourable employment, whenever old age or infirmities should render his own retirement from the office necessary. But,—as the son always regretted when talking over the circumstance, with becoming remorse that his mind was differently swayed,—through an enterprising spirit he preferred the adventurous to the more sober calling for which his father had originally destined him.

To illustrate the temper of his youth, his often repeated anecdote of an event which occurred when he was but twelve years old may here be presented:—

'After our hours of study, boys of my own age were allowed to meet together for exercise and amusement, without the controlling presence of our Maulvees (tutors). Many an enterprising feat had been performed during our hours of play, but none that has impressed me with so keen a remembrance of my youthful follies as the one I am about

to relate. We had long observed the wild pigeons, which owned not any earthly master, take refuge for the night in an old and dilapidated well outside the town; a plan was laid between my companions and myself to possess ourselves of some of these pigeons, and one evening we assembled by agreement to put our project in force.

'A strong rope was procured, to which we fastened a piece of board, so as to form a seat; a bag was provided, into which the game was to be deposited as fast as it was caught; and a thick stick, with which to ascertain in the holes the situation of each pigeon, which was to be seized by the neck when thus discovered. Everything was arranged when, "Who will be lowered first?" was inquired by the head of our party. Meer Mahumud was not a little pleased when it was suggested, that he was the bravest boy among them; and with a proud feeling of ecstasy my young heart bounded whilst I seated myself on the board and was lowered from the summit for several yards down the well, my young companions holding fast the rope outside from which I was suspended; the bag conveniently slung across my left shoulder, with the open mouth in front, to enable me to deposit my gleanings without delay.

'I had collected several pigeons in this way; and, at last, my stick was presented to search in a new aperture, where it seemed to be resisted by something more than the soft feathers of a bird; fearless as I was, my young hand was thrust into the hole, and I caught at something with a firm grasp, which at once convinced me could not be a pigeon; but I resolved not to part from my prize very readily, and drawing my hand and arm from the hole with great difficulty (putting all my youthful strength and energy to the task), I discovered my prize was a living snake of rather a large size.

'Fearful to announce the nature of my present prisoner to the youngsters, at whose mercy I then was, lest they, through terror, should let the rope go, and thus precipitate me to the bottom of the well, I called out, "Draw up! draw up quickly! delay not, brothers!" and I was soon brought to the mouth of the well with the snake coiled round my arm, and firmly grasped just under the head, so that it could not extricate itself or injure me. The boys soon assisted me off the top of the well, and brought pieces of stone, with which they bruised the snake's head until I was relieved from its pressure on my arm by its death. I should remark, that I had presence of mind to rub the head against the wall on my ascent, which had considerably lessened the snake's pressure on my arm, and I believe it was more than half dead before I had reached the top.

'My arm pained me dreadfully, but still my greatest agony was for fear my father should hear of my exploit, which I felt convinced would not only excite his present anger, but be the means of preventing my having another opportunity of enjoying the society and amusements of my young companions. Strict secrecy was therefore enjoined by my command upon the whole party; and returning to my home, I thought to disguise my real feelings by seeking repose instead of the evening dinner which was prepared for me. My affectionate mother had no suspicion that I was ill, although she was much distressed that play had destroyed the appetite of her son. I had dozed for some hours, when the agony of my arm awoke me as from an uneasy dream; I could hardly recollect the last evening's adventure, for my mind seemed much bewildered. My groans, however, brought my

mother to my bed-side, whose tender care was exercised in fomenting my arm, which she found much swollen and inflamed.

'The secret of my enterprize was never divulged by me until the news of my sudden illness was reported in the neighbourhood; when some of my young friends told the tale, and it was conveyed by one of the gossiping old women, of the city to the zeenahnah of my mother. My arm was for a long period rendered useless, and I was under the care of doctors for many months; the whole skin peeled off, and left me cause for remembering the circumstance, although it did not cure me of that preference for enterprize, which afterwards drew me from my home to visit other places, and to search for new adventures. Often did I remonstrate with my father on the subject of my future profession: how often did I declare my disinclination to pursue those studies (deemed essential to fit me for the office I was in due time to be appointed to), and avow my predilection for a military life!'

At that period of Indian History, the Punjaab district was disturbed by the depredations of the Mahrattas.[2] Hordes of those lawless banditti were in the habit of frequent encroachments on the Mussulmaun possessions, committing frightful enormities in their predatory excursions against towns and villages, spreading terror and desolation wherever they approached. On this account military ardour was encouraged by the heads of families, and the youth of respectable Mussulmauns were duly instructed in the use of defensive weapons, as a measure of prudence by which they were enabled, whenever called upon, to defend the lives and property of their neighbours as well as of their individual families.

In describing this period of his life, I have often heard Meer Hadjee Shah confess with remorse, that he was wont to pay far greater attention to his military instructors than to the Maulvee's lectures on law or other dry subjects of books, as he then often thought them, and at fourteen years old he was perfect master of the sabre, spear, matchlock, and the bow; able even then to defend himself against an enemy, or take the palm of victory, when practising those arts with the youth of his own standing.

At seventeen, his love of enterprize drew him from the calm study of his tutors under the parental roof, to seek amongst strangers employment better suited to his inclination. His early adventures were attended with many vicissitudes and trials, which would (however interesting to those who have loved him) appear tedious to the general reader; I shall, therefore, but digress occasionally with such anecdotes as maybe generally interesting. One which presents him in the early part of his career amongst strangers in a position which marks the bravery of his youth, I shall take the liberty of introducing in his own words:—

'After a good night's repose, I was desirous of pursuing my march, and prepared to take leave of my hospitable entertainer (a Kauzy of the village), from whom I had received the utmost attention and civility. This kind-hearted man was unwilling to allow of my journeying alone, and insisted that two of his menservants should accompany me that day's march at least. I had no fears, nor much to lose beside my life, and for some time

resisted the offer, but without avail. The men therefore accompanied me, and after six hours' walk, I prevailed on them to take refreshment and rest at the serai of the village, through which we had to pass, with leave to retrace their way home afterwards with my duty to their master.

'Released from their guardianship, I felt my own independence revive, and bounded on as lively as the antelope, full of hope that I might yet reach the Rajah's territory by nightfall, who, I had heard, was willing to give employment to the enterprising youth of Loodeeanah, in the army he was then raising. I must have walked since the morning near twenty koss (forty miles) without food or water; but I neither felt hunger nor fatigue, so deeply was my heart engaged in the prospect of a military life. At length hunger awakened me to a sense of my forlorn condition, for I had left home without a coin in my possession; and although I passed through many inhabited villages where relief would have been gladly tendered, if I had only applied for it, yet my pride forbade the humble words of supplicating for a meal; hungry as I was, death even would have been preferable at that time to breathing out a want amongst strangers.

'I was overjoyed on approaching a cultivated tract of country to find a field of wheat, ripe for the harvest, evincing the great Creator's bountiful hand, and hesitated not, without a scruple, to possess myself of an occasional handful as I passed along, rubbing the ears and eating as I went, to save that time I deemed so precious; for my anxiety to reach the Rajah and employment, increased as the day advanced. I had traversed near thirty koss on foot, scarcely having halted since the dawning day; this to a young man who had been through life indulged by the luxury of a horse for exercise, whilst under the parental roof, may be imagined to have been no trifling undertaking. But buoyant youth, filled with hopes of honour and preferment is regardless of those difficulties which must subdue the indolent or less aspiring spirit.

'At the extremity of a large field through which I had to pass, my eye rested on a man with two oxen, certain indications, I imagined, of a well of water being adjacent for the purpose of irrigation, towards whom I approached sufficiently near to inquire if a draught of pure water could be obtained for a thirsty traveller. The sturdy farmer-looking man seemed to view me with scrutiny, without deigning to reply; my question was repeated with civility, but no answer was given, and I then fancied his looks foreboded no good meaning; he held in his hand a large heavy stick studded at the top with iron rings (in common use with the lower orders of people as a weapon of defence against robbers, tigers, wolves, or reptiles), but as I stood far enough off to be out of immediate danger of a sudden attack, if such was premeditated, the surly look of his countenance gave me little concern until he called out in a commanding tone, "Youngster! off with your garments; lay down those bow and arrows instantly, or I will fell you to the earth with this staff that is in my hand!" which he raised in a position to prove himself in earnest.

'My surprise was great, but it did not put me off my guard, and I replied with courage, that his insolent demand would not meet with a willing compliance; I was able to defend myself, young as I was, against his treacherous intentions on an unoffending traveller; and I prepared my bow in the expectation that he would either be deterred, or leave me no

alternative but to use it in self-defence. Two arrows were promptly prepared, one placed in my bow, the other in my girdle, as he advanced repeating his demand, with the countenance of a ruffian, and his club elevated; he no doubt fancied that the bow was a plaything in the hand of a mere ignorant stripling. I warned him repeatedly not to advance, or my bow should teach him that my young arm was well instructed.

'He however dared my vengeance, and advanced still nearer, when seeing I had no alternative, I aimed at his legs, not desiring to revenge but to deter my enemy; the arrow entered his thigh, passing completely through: he was astonished and stood like a statue. I then desired him to throw down his club, with which I walked away, or rather ran a sufficient distance to relieve myself from further expectation of annoyances from my enemy or the villagers.

'Much time had been spent in that contest, which had left me the victor; I waited not however to witness his further movements, but with hastened steps in half an hour I reached the Rajah's palace. Several soldiers were guarding outside the gate, where stood, as is usual, charpoys for their use, on one of which, uninvited, I seated myself, fatigued by my long and unusual exercise. The men with great civility offered me water and their hookha, and when refreshed I answered their many inquiries, founded very naturally on my appearance, my youth, and travelling without an attendant.

'I frankly told them that the Rajah's famed liberality had drawn me from Loodeeanah to seek employment as a soldier under his command. One of my new acquaintance recommended my immediately going into the palace, where the Rajah was seated in Durbar (holding his Court) for the express purpose of receiving applicants for the army now raising, under the expectation of a hostile visit from the Sikhs. I followed my guide through several avenues and courts until we arrived at the Baarah Daree[3] (twelve doors), or state apartments.'

I must, however, here abstain from following Meer Hadjee Shah through the whole detail of his intimacy with the Rajah, which continued for some years, and by whom he was fostered as a favourite son; he accompanied the Rajah to the field against the Sikhs, whose singular habits and manners, both in battle and in their domestic circle, he has often amused his friends by relating.

His first pilgrimage to Mecca was undertaken whilst a very young man, travelling the whole way by land, and enduring many trials and hardships in what he deemed 'The road of God'. On one occasion he was beset by wolves whilst on foot; but as he always confessed his preservation was by the power and goodness of Divine Providence, so in the present instance the wolves even ran from the blows of his staff, howling to their dens.

During his stay in Arabia, when on his pilgrimage, his funds were exhausted, and he had no knowledge of a single individual from whom he could condescend to borrow, but as he always put his sole trust in God, a way was made for his returning prosperity in rather a singular and unexpected manner.

A rich Begum, the widow of a wealthy Arab merchant, had long suffered from a severe illness, and had tried every medical prescription within her reach without relief. On a certain night she dreamed that a Syaad pilgrim from India, who had taken up his abode at the serai outside the town, possessed a medicine which would restore her to health. She had faith in her dream, and sent a polite message to the Syaad, who was described minutely by the particulars of her dream. Meer Hadjee Shah attended the summons, but assured the lady who conversed with him, that he was not acquainted with medicine; true, he had a simple preparation, which enabled him to benefit a fellow pilgrim, when by circumstances no better adviser could be found: he then offered her the powder, giving directions how to use it, and left her. In the evening a handsome dinner was conveyed by this lady's orders to Meer Hadjee Shah, which he accepted with gratitude to God, and for several days this was repeated, proving a sensible benefit to him, and to others equally destitute of the means of present provision, who were abiding at the serai.

In the course of a week he was again summoned to attend the Begum, who was entirely cured of her long illness, which she attributed solely to the medicine he had left with her, and she now desired to prove her gratitude by a pecuniary compensation. He was too much gratified at the efficacy of his simple remedy, to require further recompense than the opportunity he had enjoyed of rendering himself useful to a fellow-creature, and would have refused the reward tendered, but the lady had resolved not to be outdone in generosity; and finding how he was circumstanced by another channel, she made so many earnest appeals, that he at last consented to accept as much as would defray his expenses for the journey to the next place he was on the point of embarking for, where he expected to meet with his Indian friends, and a supply of cash.

On one occasion, he was exposed to danger from a tiger, but, to use his own words, 'as my trust was placed faithfully in God, so was I preserved by Divine favour'. The anecdote relative to that event, I cannot pass over, and therefore I relate it, as near as I recollect, in his own words:—'I was at Lucknow during the reign of the Nuwaub, Shujah ood Dowlah,[4] who delighted much in field sports; on one occasion it was announced that he intended to hunt tigers, and orders were issued to the nobility and his courtiers, requiring their attendance on elephants, to accompany him on a certain day. The preparations were made on a grand scale, and excited a lively interest throughout the city. I had never been present at a tiger hunt, and I felt my usual ambition to share in the adventures of that day too irresistible to be conquered by suggestions of prudence; and accordingly I went, on horseback, accompanied by a friend about my own age, falling into the rear of the Nuwaub's cavalcade which was far more splendid than any thing I had before witnessed, the train of elephants richly caparisoned, on which were seated in their gold or silver howdahs, the whole strength of the Court in rich dresses.

'The hunting party had penetrated the jungle a considerable distance before a single trace of a tiger could be discovered, when, at length it was announced to the Nuwaub that the sheekaarees[5] (huntsmen) had reason to believe one at least was concealed in the high grass near which the party approached. The order was then given to loosen the led buffaloes, and drive them towards the grass which concealed the game, a practice at that time common with Native sportsmen to rouse the ferocious animal, or to attract him, if

hungry, from his lurking place; but it seemed as if the buffaloes were scared by the number of elephants, for with all the goading and whipping, which was dealt to them unsparingly, they could not be pressed into the service for which they were provided.

'The Nuwaub was remarkable for bravery, and prided himself on his successful shot; he therefore caused his elephant to advance to the edge of the high grass, that he might have the satisfaction of the first fire, when the animal should be roused. Some delay in this, induced the Nuwaub to order the dunkah-wallah (kettle-drummer) on horseback to be guarded on each side by soldiers with drawn sabres, to advance in front and beat his drums. The first sounds of the dunkah roused the tiger: this being instantly perceived, the horsemen wheeled round, and were in a second or two cleared from danger. The tiger sprang towards the elephant, but was instantly thrown back by her trunk to a good distance, the Nuwaub taking aim at the same instant, fired and slightly wounded the animal, only however sufficiently to add to its former rage.

'My friend and myself were at this time (attracted by our eagerness to witness the sports) not many paces from the spot, when perceiving our dangerous position, retreat was the thought of the moment with us both: my friend's horse obeyed the signal, but mine was petrified by fear; no statue ever stood more mute and immoveable; for a second I gave myself up for lost, but again my heart was lifted up to the only Power whence safety proceeds, and drawing my sabre as the tiger was springing towards me (the same sabre which had been the instrument of safety to my grandsire in a like danger) as my arm was raised to level the blow, the animal curved his spring as if in fear of the weapon, brushed close to my horse's nose, and then stuck its sharp talons in the neck of another horse on which a Pattaan soldier was seated: his horse plunged, kicked, threw his rider on the ground with a violence that left him senseless, his open sabre falling on the handle, which, like a miracle, was forced into the earth leaving the point upwards in a slanting position, just clearing his neck by a few inches.

'The tiger turned on the man with fury and wide-extended jaw, but was met by the sabre point, and the Pattaan's red turban, which fell at the instant; the tiger endeavouring to extricate himself from the entanglement, the sabre entered deeper through his jaw, from which he had but just released himself, when a ball from the Nuwaub's rifle entered his side and he slank into the grass, where he was followed and soon dispatched.'

In his travels Meer Hadjee Shah had often been exposed to the dangerous consequences of the plague; but (as he declares), he was always preserved from the contagion through the same protecting care of Divine Providence which had followed him throughout his life. He has been often in the very cities where it raged with awful violence, yet neither himself nor those who were of his party, were ever attacked by that scourge. On one occasion, he was, with a large party of pilgrims, halting for several days together at a place called Bundah Kungoon[6] (the word Bundah implies the sea-shore), preparatory to commencing their projected journey to Shiraaz; he relates, that the mules and camels were provided, and even the day fixed for their march; but, in consequence of a dream he had been visited with, he was resolved to change his course, even should his fellow-

travellers determine on pursuing their first plan, and thereby leave him to journey alone in an opposite direction.

He made his new resolution known to the pilgrims, and imparted to them the dream, viz., 'Go not to Shiraaz, where thou shalt not find profit or pleasure, but bend thy steps towards Kraabaallah. His companions laughed at his wild scheme, and as their minds were fixed on Shiraaz, they would have persuaded Meer Hadjee Shah to accompany them; but, no, his dream prevailed over every other argument, and he set out accompanied by two poor Syaads and fifteen mendicant pilgrims, embarking at Kungoon on a small vessel for Bushire, which by a favourable wind they reached on the third day. Here they first learned the distressing intelligence that the plague had raged with frightful consequences to the population; and during their few days' sojourn at Busserah, he says, many victims fell by that awful visitation. The city itself was in sad disorder, business entirely suspended, and many of the richer inhabitants had fled from the scene of terror and dismay. No accommodation for travellers within his means could be procured by Meer Hadjee Shah, and he was constrained to set out on foot with his companions, after providing themselves with provisions for a few days.

Unused to walk any great distance of late, and the effects of the short voyage not being entirely removed, he grew weary ere the first day's march was ended; 'But here', he says, 'I found how kind my Creator was to me, who put it into the hearts of my companions to take it by turns to carry me, until we arrived within sight of Feringhee Bargh[7] (Foreigners' Garden), where we found many of the healthy inhabitants from Bushire had, with permission, taken refuge, some in tents, others without a shelter; and in their haste to flee from danger, had forsaken all their possessions, and neglected provision for present comfort; a change of garments even had been forgotten in their haste to escape from the pestilential city.

'Never', he says, 'shall I forget the confusion presented at this place nor the clamorous demands upon us, whom they esteemed religious men, for our prayers and intercessions that the scourge might be removed from them. I could not help thinking and expressing also, "How ready weak mortals are to supplicate for God's help when death or affliction approaches their threshold, who in prosperity either forget Him entirely or neglect to seek Him or to obey His just commands."

'The next day our march led us to the vicinity of a large populated town. We halted near a plantation of date-trees, and one of our mendicant pilgrims was dispatched with money to purchase bread and dates for our sustenance, with instructions to conceal, if possible, our numbers and our halting-place, fearing that the inhabitants might assail us with stones if it were suspected that we came from the infected city. The quantity of food, however, required for so large a party excited suspicion, but our preservation was again secured by Divine interference.

'A Dirzy[9] from the city visited our resting-place, and finding we were pilgrims, asked permission to travel with us to Kraabaallah, which was readily agreed to, and when a host of men were observed issuing from the town, this man, who was an inhabitant, ran

towards them, explained that we were all healthy men, and interested several Arab-Syaads to come forward and befriend me and my party, which they readily assented to on finding that brother Syaads were in danger. The Kauzy of the town hearing all the particulars attending us, came to the spot which we had selected for our halt, presented his nuzza of twenty-one dinars to me, entreated pardon for the intended assault he had in ignorance authorized, obliged me to accept his proffered civilities, and we remained several days in the enjoyment of hospitality in that town, where we had at first such strong reasons to anticipate violence and persecution; but this could not be whilst the arm of the Lord was raised to shelter His confiding servants. To Him be the praise and the glory for every preservation I have been favoured with! and many were the perils with which I was surrounded in my walk through life, yet, always safely brought through them, because I never failed putting my trust in His mercy and protection who alone could defend me.'

On one occasion of his pilgrimage to Mecca, Meer Hadjee Shah, with all his companions on board a trading ship, off the coast of Arabia, were attacked by pirates, and taken prisoners; but, as he always declared, the goodness of Divine Providence again preserved him and those with him from the hands of their enemies. In the event in question, he undertook to speak for all his party to the Arab chief, before whom they were taken prisoners, and having a thorough knowledge of the Arabic language, he pleaded their joint cause so effectually, that the chief not only liberated the whole party, but forced presents upon them in compensation for their inconvenient detention.

The most interesting, if not the most remarkable incident which occurred to Meer Hadjee Shah in his journey through life, remains to be told. The story has been so often related by his own lips, that I think there will be little difficulty in repeating it here from memory. It may be deemed prolix, yet I should not do justice by a farther abridgement.

FATIMA'S HISTORY

'Fatima was the daughter of Sheikh Mahumud,[9] an Arab, chief of a tribe, dwelling in the neighbourhood of Yumen, who was a wealthy man, and much esteemed amongst his people. His wife died when Fatima, their only child, was but six years old, and two years after her father also was taken from this world, leaving his whole estate and possessions to his daughter, and both to the guardianship of his own brother, Sheikh ——, who was tenderly attached to the little girl, and from whom she received the fostering care of parental solicitude.

'This uncle was married to a lady of no very amiable temper, who seized every opportunity of rendering the orphan daughter of his brother as comfortless as possible, but her uncle's affection never slackened for an instant, and this consoled her whenever she had trials of a domestic nature to distress her meek spirit.

'When Fatima had reached her sixteenth year, an eligible match being provided by her uncle, it was intended to be immediately solemnized; for which purpose her uncle went

over to Yumen to make preparations for the nuptials, where he expected to be detained a few days; leaving with his niece the keys of all his treasuries, whether of money or jewels.

'On the very day of his departure from home, a brother of his wife's arrived at the mansion, and required, in Fatima's presence, a loan of five hundred pieces of silver. This could only be obtained by Fatima's consent, who firmly declared her resolution not to betray the trust her uncle had reposed in her. The wife was severe in her censures on her husband's parsimony, as she termed his prudence, and reviled Fatima for being the favoured person in charge of his property. This woman in her rage against the unoffending girl, struck her several times with violence. Situated as their residence was, apart from a single neighbour, she feared to stay during her uncle's absence, and left the house not knowing exactly where to seek a temporary shelter; but recollecting a distant relation of her mother's resided at Bytool Faakere,[10] no great distance off (within a walk as she imagined), she left her home without further reflection, unattended by a single servant.

'When within a mile of her destined place of refuge, she was observed by a party of Bedouin robbers, who descended from their hill to arrest her progress, by whom she was conveyed to their retreat, almost in a state of insensibility from terror and dismay. Arriving at their hut, however, she was cheered by the sight of females, one of whom particularly struck her as being very superior to her companions, and in whose countenance benevolence and pity seemed to indicate a sympathizing friend in this hour of severe trial. The women were desired to relieve the prisoner Fatima of her valuables, which were, in accordance with their station, very costly both in pearls and gold ornaments.

'Fatima overheard, during the night, some disputes and debates between the robbers, about the disposal of her person, one of whom was single, and declared his willingness to marry the girl, and so retain her with them; but Fatima had, when she was seized, recognized his countenance, having seen him before, and knew that his connexions lived in the town of Bytool Faakere, which she had unguardedly declared. The robbers, therefore, dreaded detection if her life was spared; they were not by nature sanguinary, but in this case there seemed no medium between their apprehension and the death of Fatima.

'The female, however, who had at first sight appeared so amiable and friendly, fulfilled the poor girl's impressions, by strenuously exerting her influence, and eventually prevailed, in saving the orphan Fatima from the premeditated sacrifice of life; and as no better arrangement could be made to secure the robbers from detection, it was at length agreed she should be sold to slavery. This decided on, the swiftest camel in their possession was prepared at an early hour, a few short minutes only being allowed to Fatima, to pour out her gratitude to God, and express her acknowledgements to her humane benefactress, when she was mounted on the camel's back, with the husband of that kind-hearted female.

'With the prospect of continued life, poor Fatima ceased to feel acute agony, and bore the fatigue of a whole day's swift riding without a murmur, for the Bedouin's behaviour was marked with respect. Towards the evening, as they drew near to a large town, the Bedouin halted by the margin of a forest, and the long night was passed in profound silence, with no other shelter than that which the forest afforded; and at the earliest dawn the march was again resumed, nor did he slacken his speed, until they were in sight of Mocha, where he designed to dispose of his victim. She was there sold to a regular slave-merchant, who was willing to pay the price demanded when he saw the beautiful face and figure of the poor girl, expecting to make a handsome profit by the bargain.

'The Bedouin made his respectful obedience and departed in haste, leaving poor Fatima in almost a state of stupor from fatigue. Left however to herself in the slave-merchant's house, she seemed to revive, and again to reflect on the past, present, and future. Her escape from death called forth grateful feelings, and she felt so far secure that the wretch who had bought her, had an interest in her life, therefore she had no further fear of assassination. But then she reverted to her bonds; painful indeed were the reflections, that she who had been nobly born, and nursed in the lap of luxury, should find herself a slave, and not one friendly voice to soothe her in her bondage. She resolved however (knowing the privilege of her country's law) to select for herself a future proprietor.

'Her resolution was soon put to the test; she was summoned to appear before a fisherman, who had caught a glimpse of her fine figure as she entered Mocha, and who desired to purchase her to head his house. The poor girl summoned all her courage to meet this degrading offer with dignity. A handsome sum was offered by the fisherman, as she appeared before him to reject the proposal. "Here is your new master, young lady," said the slave-merchant; "behave well, and he will marry you."

Fatima looked up, with all her native pride upon her brow; "He shall never be my master!" she replied, with so much firmness, that (astonished as they were) convinced the bargainers that Fatima was in earnest. The merchant inquired her objection, us she had betrayed no unwillingness to be sold to him; she answered firmly, whilst the starting tear was in her eye, "My objection to that man is our inequality: I am of noble birth. My willingness to become your slave, was to free me from the hands of those who first premeditated my murder; and sooner than my liberty should be sold to the creature I must detest, this dagger", as she drew one from her vest, "shall free me from this world's vexations".

'This threat settled the argument, for the slave-merchant calculated on the loss of three hundred dinars he had paid to the Bedouin; and Fatima, aware of this, without actually intending any violence to herself, felt justified in deterring the slave-merchant from further importunities. Several suitors came to see, with a view to purchase the beautiful Arab of noble birth, but having acted so decidedly in the first instance, the merchant felt himself obliged to permit her to refuse at will, and she rejected all who had made their proposal.

'Meer Hadjee Shah, in the fulfilment of his promise to his wife at parting, to take home a slave for her attendant, happening at that time to be passing through Mocha, inquired for a slave-merchant: he was conducted to the house where Fatima was still a prisoner with many other less noble, but equally unhappy females. Fatima raised her eyes as he entered the hall; she fancied by his benevolent countenance that his heart must be kind; she cast a second glance and thought such a man would surely feel for her sufferings and be a good master. His eye had met hers, which was instantly withdrawn with unaffecting modesty; something prepossessed him that the poor girl was unhappy, and his first idea was pity, the second her liberation from slavery, and, if possible, restoration to her friends.

'When alone with the slave-merchant, Meer Hadjee Shah inquired the price he would take for Fatima. "Six hundred pieces of silver (dinars),"[11] was the reply.—"I am not rich enough," answered the pilgrim; "salaam, I must look elsewhere for one:" and he was moving on.—-"Stay," said the merchant, "I am anxious to get that girl off my hands, for she is a stubborn subject, over whom I have no control; I never like to buy these slaves of high birth, they always give me trouble. I paid three hundred dinars to the Bedouin for her, now if she will agree to have you for her master (which I very much doubt, she has so many scruples to overcome), you shall add fifty to that sum, and I will be satisfied."

'They entered the hall a second time together, when the merchant addressed Fatima. "This gentleman desires to purchase you; he is a Syaad of India, not rich, he says, but of a high family, as well as a descendant of the Emaums."—"As you will," was all the answer Fatima could make. The money was accordingly paid down, and the poor girl led away from her prison-house, by the first kind soul she had met since she quitted her benefactress in the Bedouins' retreat.

'Fatima's situation had excited a lively interest in the heart of Meer Hadjee Shah, even before he knew the history of those sufferings that had brought her into bondage, for he was benevolent, and thought she seemed unhappy; he wanted no stronger inducement than this to urge him to release her. Many a poor wretched slave had been liberated through his means in a similar way, whilst making his pilgrimages; and in his own home I have had opportunities of seeing his almost paternal kindness invariably exercised towards his slaves, some of whom he has, to my knowledge, set at liberty, both male and female, giving them the opportunity of settling, or leaving them to choose for themselves their place of future servitude.

'But to return to Fatima. On taking her to his lodgings, he tried to comfort her with the solicitude of a father, and having assured her she was free, inquired where her family resided, that she might be forwarded to them. The poor girl could scarce believe the words she heard were reality and not a dream; so much unlooked for generosity and benevolence overpowered her with gratitude, whilst he addressed her as his daughter, and explained his motives for becoming her purchaser, adding, "Our laws forbid us to make slaves of the offspring of Mussulmauns of either sex; although be it confessed with sorrow, unthinking men do often defy the law, in pursuance of their will; yet I would not sell my hopes of heaven for all that earth could give. I again repeat, you are free; I am not rich, but the half of my remaining funds set apart to take me to my home in India, shall be

devoted to your service, and without any delay I will arrange for your return to Yumen, under safe convoy" (and seeing she was about to express her gratitude to him): "Forbear, as you respect me, a single word of acknowledgement; if any thanks are due, it is to that good Providence who hath preserved you from greater evils, to Whom be offered also my humble praises, that through His mercy my steps were directed through Mocha, at such a time as this, when an unprotected female required fatherly protection."

'Fatima was in tears during this speech of her true friend, and when he paused, she said, "Heaven, indeed, sent you to my aid; you seem like a guardian angel. Much, much I fear to be separated from one so pious and so bountiful. May I not again be thrown into similar scenes to those your generosity has been exercised to release me from? Who but yourself and my own dear uncle could ever feel that lively interest for my preservation?"

'Meer Hadjee Shah would willingly have conveyed the poor girl to her uncle' s residence near Yumen, had it been possible; but his arrangements were made to sail by an Arab ship to Bombay, which if many days postponed would detain him nearly another year from India, where he was aware his return was expected by his wife and family; and he was not willing to give them cause for uneasiness, by any further delay; he however went out to make inquiries at Mocha for some safe means of getting Fatima conveyed to her uncle.

'In the meantime she resolved in her mind the several circumstances attending her actual situation in the world, and before the next morning had well dawned, she had resolved on urging her kind protector to take her with him to India, before whom she appeared with a more tranquil countenance than he had yet witnessed. When they were seated, he said, "Well, Fatima, I propose to devote this day to the arrangement of all things necessary for your comfort on your journey home, and to-morrow morning the kaarawaun[12] sets out for Yumen, where I heartily pray you may be conducted in safety, and meet your uncle in joy. Have no fears for your journey, put your entire trust in God, and never forget that your safety and liberation were wrought out by His goodness alone."

'"Huzerut[13] (revered Sir)," she replied, "I have weighed well the advantages I should derive by being always near to you, against the prospects of my home and wealth in Arabia, which I am resolved to relinquish if you accede to my proposal. Let me then continue to be your slave, or your servant, if that term is more agreeable to my kind master. Slavery with a holy master is preferable to freedom with wealth and impiety. You must have servants, I will be the humblest and not the least faithful in my devoted services."

'The pious man was surprised beyond measure; he attempted to dissuade her, and referred to his wife and children in India. "Oh! take me to them," she cried with energy; "I will be to them all you or they can desire," This arrangement of Fatima's was rather perplexing to him; her tears and entreaties, however, prevailed over his preference, and he quieted her agitation by agreeing to take her to India with him.

'After maturely weighing all the circumstances of the voyage by sea, and the long journey by land from Bombay to Lucknow, he came to the determination of giving Fatima a legal claim to his protection, and thereby a security also from slanderous imputations either against her or himself, by marrying her before they embarked at Mocha; and on their arrival at Lucknow, Fatima was presented to his first wife as worthy her sympathy and kindness, by whom she was received and cherished as a dear sister. The whole family were sincerely attached to the amiable lady during the many years she lived with them in Hindoostaun. Her days were passed in piety and peace, leaving not an instance to call forth the regrets of Meer Hadjee Shah, that he had complied with her entreaties in giving her his permanent protection. Her removal from this life to a better was mourned by every member of the family with equal sorrow as when their dearest relative ceased to live.'

It is my intention (if I am permitted), at some future period, to write a more circumstantial account of Meer Hadjee Shah's adventures through life, than my present limits allow. In the meantime, however, I must satisfy myself by a few remarks founded on a personal observation and intimacy during the last eleven years of his eventful life. His example and precept kept pace with each other, 'That this world and all its vanities, were nothing in comparison with acquiring a knowledge of God's holy will, and obeying Him, in thought, in word, and deed.'

He was persuaded by the tenets of his religion that by exercising the body in the pilgrimage to Mecca, the heart of man was enlightened in the knowledge and love of God. He found by obeying the several duties of the religion he professed, and by enduring the consequent trials and privations of a pilgrimage without regard to any feelings of selfish gratification or indulgent ease, that, his nature being humbled, his love to God was more abundant.

His law commanded him to fast at stated periods, and although he was turned of seventy when I first saw him, yet he never failed, as the season of Rumzaun approached, to undergo the severity of that ordinance day by day during the full period of thirty days; and it was even a source of uneasiness to my venerated friend, when, two years prior to his decease, his medical friends, aided by the solicitude of his family, urged and prevailed on him to discontinue the duty, which by reason of his age was considered dangerous to health, and perhaps to life. Prayer was his comfort; meditation and praise his chief delight. I never saw him otherways than engaged in some profitable exercise, by which he was drawing near to his Creator, and preparing himself for the blessedness of eternity, on which his soul relied.

During our eleven years' constant intercourse, I can answer for his early diligence; before the day had dawned his head was bowed in adoration to his Maker and Preserver. At all seasons of the year, and under all circumstances, this duty was never omitted. Even in sickness, if his strength failed him, his head was bowed on a tray of earth, to mark his dutiful recollection of the several hours appointed for prayer. The Psalmist's language has often been realized to my view, in him, 'Seven times a day do I praise thee, O Lord,' and 'at midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee,' when witnessing his undeviating

observance of stated prayer duties; and when those duties were accomplished, even his amusements were gleaned from devotional works, visits of charity, and acts of benevolence. I never saw him idle; every moment was occupied in prayer or in good works. His memory was retentive, and every anecdote he related was a lesson calculated to lead the mind of his auditor to seek, trust, and obey God, or to love our neighbour as ourselves.

The many hours we have passed in profitable discourses or readings from our Holy Scripture and the lives of the Prophets have left on my memory lasting impressions.

I was, at first, surprised to find Meer Hadjee Shah so well acquainted with the prominent characters of our Scripture history, until the source from whence his knowledge had been enlarged was produced and read aloud by my husband every evening to our family party. The 'Hyaatool Kaaloob' (a work before alluded to) occupied us for a very long period, each passage being verbally translated to me by my husband.

When that work was finished, our Holy Scripture was brought forward, which, as I read, each passage was again translated by my husband, either in Persian or Hindoostaunic, as best suited the understanding of our party at the time. So interesting was the subject, that we have been five or six hours at, a time engaged without tiring or even remembering the flight of those moments which were devoted, I trust, so beneficially to us all.

Meer Hadjee Shah's views of worldly enjoyments resembled the Durweish's in principle; for he thought it unworthy to heap up riches, to swell his wardrobe, or to fare on sumptuous diet; but his delight consisted in sharing the little he could at any time command with those who needed it. He possessed an intelligent mind, highly cultivated by travel, and a heart beaming with tenderness and universal charity: so tempered were his affections by a religious life, that the world was made but a place of probation to him whilst looking forward with joy to the promises of God in a happy eternity. His purity of heart and life has often realized to my imagination that 'Israelite in whom (our Redeemer pronounced) there was no guile.'

I must here draw my Letters to a conclusion, with many an anxious wish that my gleanings in the society of the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun may afford profitable amusement to my friends and to those persons who may honour my work with a perusal, humbly trusting that the people whose character, manners, habits, and religion, I have taken upon me to pourtray, may improve in their opinion by a more intimate acquaintance.

In my attempt to delineate the Mussulmauns, I have been careful to speak as I have found them, not allowing prejudice to bias my judgment, either on the side of their faults or virtues. But I deem it incumbent to state, that my chief intimacy has been confined to the most worthy of their community; and that the character of a true Mussulmaun has been my aim in description. There are people professing the faith without the principle, it is true; but such persons are not confined to the Mussulmaun persuasion; they are among every class of worshippers, whether Jew or Gentile throughout the world.

Of my long sojourn in the society of the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun, I need here but remark, that I was received amongst them without prejudice, and allowed the free usage of my European habits and religious principles without a single attempt to bias or control me; that by respecting their trifling prejudices as regards eating and drinking, their esteem and confidence were secured to me; and that by evincing Christian charity, (which deters the possessor from proud seeming), I believe, I may add, their affection for me was as sincere, as I trust it will be lasting.

It may be regretted, with all my influence, that I have not been the humble instrument of conversion. None can lament more than myself that I was not deemed worthy to convince them of the necessity, or of the efficacy of that great Atonement on which my own hopes are founded. Yet may I not, without presumption, hope my sojourn, with reference to a future period, may be the humble means of good to a people with whom I had lived so many years in peace? I must for many reasons be supposed to entertain a lively interest in their welfare, and an earnest desire for their safety, although at the present moment I can distinguish but one advantage accruing from our intimacy, namely, that they no longer view the professors of Christianity as idolaters. They have learned with surprise that the Christian religion forbids idolatry,—thus the strong barrier being sapped, I trust it may be thrown down by abler servants of our Lord; for the Mussulmauns are already bound by their religion to love and reverence Christ as the Prophet of God: may the influence of his Holy Spirit enlighten their understandings to accept Him as their Redeemer!

Like the true Christian, they are looking forward to that period when Jesus Christ shall revisit the earth, and when all men shall be of one faith. How that shall be accomplished, they do not pretend to understand, but still they faithfully believe it, because it has been declared by an authority they reverence, and deem conclusive. Often, during my acquaintance with these people, have I felt obliged to applaud their fidelity, although, in some points, I could not approve of the subject on which it was displayed—their zeal at Mahurrum, for instance, when they commemorate the martyrdom of the grandchildren of their Prophet,—I have thought 'had they been favoured with the knowledge we possess, what zealous Christians would these people be, who thus honour the memory of mere holy men.'

The time, I trust, is not very far distant when not one nation in the whole world shall be ignorant of the Saviour's efficacy, and His willingness to receive all who cast their burden at the foot of His cross. My heart's desire for the people I have dwell amongst is that which St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans declares to be his prayer to God for Israel, 'that they might be saved!' and I know not any way in which I could better testify my regard for the Mussulmauns collectively, or my gratitude individually, than by recommending the whole of the tenth chapter of the Romans to the serious consideration of those persons who possess such influence, us that the gospel of peace may be preached to them effectually by well-chosen and tried servants of our Lord, who are duly prepared both in heart and speech, to make known the glad tidings to their understandings that 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' that 'If any man sin we have an

Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;' and that 'He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'

Should the view I have conscientiously given of their character be the humble means of removing prejudice from the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun, so that they may be sought and won by brotherly kindness, my humble heart will rejoice that my labours, as an observer and detailer, have been successful through the merciful orderings of Divine Providence.

[1] Ludhiana, a city, not the capital of the Panjab: 'the land of five rivers' *(panj-ab).*

[2] Under the Peshwas, Baji Rao I and Balaji Rao (A.D. 1720-61) the incursions of the Mahrattas extended as far north as the Panjab.

[3] *Barahdari,* a room nominally with twelve doors.

[4] Shuja-ud-daula, son of Mansur 'Ali Khan, Safdar Jang, Governor of Oudh: born A.D. 1731; succeeded his father, 1753. He was present at the battle of Panipat in 1761: became Wazir of the Emperor Shah 'Alam: defeated by the British at the battle of Buxar, 1764: died at Faizabad, then his seat of government, 1775.

[5] *Shikari*.

[6] Bandar [harbour] Kangun, a port on the west side of the Persian Gulf, about 100 miles west of Gombroon.

[7] Firangi Bagh, Franks' Garden.

[8] Darzi, a tailor.

[9] Shaikh Muhammad.

[10] Baitu'l-faqir, 'house of a holy man'.

[11] *Dinar,* Lat. *denarius*, a coin of varying value: see Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*[2], 317 f.

[12] *Karwan,* a caravan.

[13] *Hazrat*.

THE END

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Kungoon, Bandar Kangun in the Persian Gulf
Kurah, *kora*, aloe water
Kurbootah, *kharbuza*, the shaddock fruit
Kutcher, *khichar*, rice boiled with pulse and spices

Labaadah, Labaadh, *labada*, a rain-coat
Labaun, *loban*, frankincense;
see LAHBAUN
Ladies, European, not visiting bazars;
Musalman, conversation of
Lahaaf, *lahaf*, a quilt
Lahbaun, see LABAUN
Lampblack, applied to the eyes
Lance, exercises with the
Leopards trained for sport
Leech vendors
Leechie, *lichi*, the fruit *Nephelium Lichi*
Left hand used for ablution, not for eating with
Letters, dedicated to God
Licenses for marriage unknown
Lights burned before the Taziahs
Lime, applied to wounds

Liquors, fermented, prohibited to Musalmans
Locusts;
used for food
Lollah, *lal*, the bird *Estrelda amandava*;
see HAVERDEWATT
Loodocanah, the city and district Ludhiana
Looking-glasses in zenanahs;
bride's face first seen in
Lota, a brass water-vessel
Luchmee, Lakshmana, image of
Luggun, *lagan* a washing pan
Lungoor, *langur*, the ape *Semnopithecus entellus*

Mabaaruck Now-Rose, *Nauroz mubarak* Maccurrub, *muqarrab*, angel messengers Madhaar, Madar, the saint Magic, to bring rain; to cause fertility Mahana, *miyana*, a kind of litter Mahdhaar, *madar*, the tree *Calotropis gigantea* Mahout, *mahawat*, an elephant driver Mahrattas, raids of in the Panjab Mahul, *mahall* the seraglio Mahummud, Muhammad, the Prophet, his mission; his title; tales regarding; fixes Friday as the Sabbath; laws of the pilgrimage; his rules of conduct; laws regarding polygamy Mahummud Baakur, Muhammad Baqir Mahurrum, the Muharram festival; date of; ornaments laid aside at; immense expenditure on; second day observances; fifth day observances; last day observances; clothes given away; inauspicious for marriages; objected to by Sunnis Majoob Soofies, *majzub*, 'abstracted' Mango tree, the Marriage, forced, prohibited; age for; settlements unknown; service; exorbitant expenditure on Matchmakers Matunjun, *muttajjan*, meat boiled with sugar and spices; see MATUNJUN Maulvee, *maulavi*, a doctor of the law Mautunjun, see MATUNJUN Mayllah, *mela*, a fair, a religious assemblage Mayndhie, *mendhi*, the shrub *Lawsonia alba*, apllied to hands and feet; smeared on bride and bridegroom; procession of; sent to bridegroom by bride; smeared on horses; rite at marriage Mayvour, *mewa*, fruit Mazoor, Mazoorie, *mazdur*, *mazdurni*, a day labourer Meals, among Musalmans Meat, use of by Musalmans Mecca, the holy city; the Holy House; life held sacred at; Black Stone at; see KAABAH Medicine, native system of Medina, the holy city Meer, *mir*, a title of Sayyids Meer Eloy Bauxh, Mir Ilahi Bakhsh Meer Hadjee Shah, Mir Haji Shah, his life; character; makes his own winding sheet; listens to the reading of the Bible; views on fasting; tea drinking; describes the Hajj; describes Mecca; life at Ludhiana; adventure with a snake; adventures with tiger; his pilgrimage to Arabia; cures an Arab lady; attacked by pirates; purchases Fatimah, an Arab girl Meer Hasan Ali, husband of the authoress Meer Hasan Ali, Mrs., the authoress Meer Nizaam ood deen, Mir Nizam-ud-din Meer Syaad Mahumud, Mir Sayyid Muhammad Meetah, meettah, *mitha*, *mithai*, sweet, sweetmeats Melons, cider made from the juice Metals transformed into gold Mhembur, *minbar*, *mimbar*, the pulpit of a mosque Mhidie, al Mahdi, 'the Directed One'; signs of his coming; his birthday Mina, *maina*, the bird *Gracula religiosa* Minerals, medicinal use of Missee, *missi*, a preparation for staining the teeth Mittie wallah, *mithaiwala*, a sweetmeat vendor Moat, *moth*, the aconite-leaved kidney bean Mocha, Mokha, a port on the Red Sea Moghdhur, *mugdar*, a sort of dumb-bell or club used in athletic exercises Mohur, a gold coin Monkeys; and alligators; affection for their offspring; and snakes; wounded; and treasure;

use of antidotes for poison Moollakhaut, *mulaqat*, a mourning assemblage Mooltanie mittee, *multani mitti*, fuller's earth Moon, new, festival at; influence of; when full auspicious; drinking the; influence on wounds Moonkih, Munkar, Munkir, the Recording Angel Moonshie, *munshi*, a writer, secretary Moosa, Musa, Moses; Musa al-Kazim, the Caliph Moosul, *musal*, a pestle used for husking rice Mortem, *matam*, mourning Moses, Musalman title of; tale regarding Moslem, Muslim, cousin of Husain Mosque, absence of decoration in; caretakers of; at Kanauj; pollution of Mosquitoes Mourning, dress worn during the Muharram festival; chaff thrown on the head; head and feet left bare; for forty days after a death; shaving forbidden during Muchullee, *machhli*, fish Mucka Beg Muckunpore, Makanpur Mudgeluss, *majlis*, a mourning assembly Muggalanie, *Mughlani*, a Moghul woman, a needlewoman Mugganee, *mangni*, the marriage engagement Muggrib, *maghrib ki namaz*, sunset prayer Mukburrah, Mukhburrah, *maqbarah*, a mausoleum Mukhdoom Jhaunneer, Makhdum Jahaniya Jahangasht, the saint Mukhun, *makkhan*, butter Mulberries Mullie, *malai*, cream Munall, *munhnal*, a pipe mouth-piece Muntah, *mantra*, spells, incantations Murdanah, *mardanah*, the men's quarters in a house Murseeah, *marsiyah*, a funeral elegy; see MUSSEEAH Musheroo, *mashru*, silk cloth permitted to be worn at prayer Mushukh, *mashk*, a skin water-bag Music in the zenanah Musnud, *masnad* a pile of cushions, a throne Musseah, Musseeah; see MURSEEAH Mustaches Myriam, Maryam, the Virgin Mary Myrtle, the tree

Naalkie, *nalki*, a kind of litter
Naarah, *nara*, a string
Nadir Shaah, Nadir Shah, King of Persia
Najoom, najoomee, *nujumi*, an astrologer
Nala and Damayanti, tale of
Namaaz, *namaz*, the daily liturgical prayer of Musalmans
Namaazie, *namazi*, one given to prayer, a devotee,
    one who calls the people to prayer
Nativity of Jesus Christ, observed by Musalmans
Naunbye, *nanbai*, a bazar baker
Nautch woman;
    Nautchunee, *nachni*, a dancer
Neam, *nim*, the tree *Melia Azadirachta*;
    see NEEM
Neellah tootee, *nila tutiya*, blue vitriol, medicinal use of
New Moon festival, the
New Year's Day, see NOU-ROSE
Nitre, manufacture of
Nizaam ood deen, Nizam-ud-din, the saint
Noah, Musalman title of;
    his place of burial;
    ark of, where rested
Nose-rings;
    see NUT
Nou-Rose, *nauroz* the New Year's Day festival
Nudghiff Usheruff, Nejef, Mashhad 'Ali

Nujeeb, *najib*, a class of infantry
Nusseer ood Deen Hyder, Nasir-ud-din Haidar, King of Oudh
Nut, Nutt, *nath*, a nose-ring
Nuwaub, *nawab*, 'a deputy', title of the rulers of Oudh
Nuzza, *nazr, nazar*, an offering from an inferior to a superior
Nykee, Nakir, the Recording Angel

Omens, at Nauroz festival; used in selecting a bride; at marriage Omir, 'Umar, the second Caliph; said to have destroyed the Alexandrian library Ood-ood, *hudhud*, the lapwing, hoopoe Oostardie, *ustadi*, a teacher; see ARTOOJEE Orme, *am*, the mango Orme peach, the peach Ornaments, use of by women; see JEWELLERY Otta, *'itr*, otto of roses Oudh, administration of justice in the Nawabi; Nawabs and Kings of

Paadishah Begum, Padshah Begam, the
Paak, *pak*, pure
Pachisi, the game
Paidshah, *padshah*, a King
Palace, the, at Delhi
Palkie, *palki*, the common palanquin
Pallungh, *palang*, a kind of bed
Paper, written, objection to burning;
  made of bamboo
Pataan, one of the Pathan tribe
Pawn, *pan*, betel leaf;
  not used during the Muharram festival
Pawndawn, *pandan*, a box to hold betel leaf
Peach, the
Pearls
Pedigrees of Sayyids carefully kept
Peer, *pir*, a Musalman saint or holy man
Pellet bow, use of the
Pepul, *pipal*, the sacred fig tree, *Ficus religiosa*
Pickles, use of, and sale
Pigeon flying;
  shooting
Pilgrims, regulations for;
  cloak worn by
Pillau, *pilau*, meat or fowl boiled with rice and spices
Pineapple, the;
  see UNANAS
Plague, an outbreak of
Plums
Poison detected by means of dishes
Polygamy;
  among Indian kings
Pomegranate, the

Prayer, the call to;
'opening of difficulties';
carpet;
times of, how announced
Prickly heat
Printing, not practised in Lucknow
Prisoners released to effect a cure of the sick or as a thank-offering
Punkah, *pankah*, a kind of fan;
punkah wala, *punkah wala*, a fan-seller
Pappayah, *papaiya*, the papaw tree, *Carica Papaya*
Purdah, *pardah*, a screen to conceal ladies
Purrh, *pahar*, a watch, a measure of time
Pyjaamah, *paejama*, drawers;
stuff used in making

Quail fighting
Quicksilver, use of in medicine

Racaab puttie, *rikab patthari*, a stone plate
Rain magic
Rainy season, the
Rajpoots, Rajputs, infanticide among
Raspberries
Ravenscroft, G., murder of
Red, the Sunni colour;
of Husain
Reetah, *ritha* the soapnut, use of in medicine
Resident at Lucknow, the
Resurrection, doctrine of the
Ricketts, Mordaunt, Resident at Lucknow
Right hand used in eating
River, course of changed by a saint
Romall, *rumal*, a handkerchief
Rooey, *rohu* the carp fish
Rope-dancing
Roses;
smelling of, causes colds and sneezing;
rose water;
syrup, seeds, oil, uses of
Roshunie, *roshanai*, ink
Rozedhaar, *rozadar*, one who keeps a fast
Rumzaun, Ramazan, Ramzan, the festival
Rutt, *rath*, a bullock carriage
Ruzzie, *razai* a quilt
Ryott, *ra'iyat* a subject, a cultivator

Saabeel, *sabil*,
the place where sherbet is distributed at the Muharram festival
Saadie, Shaikh S'adi, the Persian poet
Saag, *sag*, herbs of various kinds used in cooking
Saalik, *salik*, a devotee, a kind of Sufi
Saatarah, *sitara*, a guitar
Sabbath, the, among Musalmans
Sacrifice of animals at the Bakrah 'Id festival
Safdar Jang, Nawab of Oudh, tomb of
Sahbaund, Sawan, the fourth Hindu month
Sahib Logue, Sahib Log, Europeans
Saints' tombs at Kanauj
Sainturh, *sentha* the grass *Saccharum ciliare*;
see SECUNDAH
Sakeena Koobraah, Sakina Kibriya, daughter of Husain
Salaam-oon-ali khoon, *salam 'alai-kum*, 'Peace be with thee'
Sallon, *salan*, a curry of meat, fish, or vegetables
Sampwalla, *sampwala*, a snake-charmer
Sarchuk, *saachaq*, fruits, &c., carried in procession at a marriage
Saulgirrah, *salgirah*, the knot tied to mark a birthday
Scales, the, doctrine of
Scapegoat, released in times of sickness
Scorpio, moon of, inauspicious
Scorpions, mode of repelling
Seclusion of womem, origin of the custom
Secundah, *sarkanda*,
roots of the grass *Saccharum ciliare*, used for mats and screens;
see SAINTURH
Secungebeen, *sikanjabin*, oxymel, vinegar
Seepie wallah deelie sukha,
sipi wala gila sukha, moist or dry cuppers
Seer, *scr*, a weight of about two pounds
Serai, *sarai*, a native inn
Seur, *suar* a hog, a term of abuse
Seven, a lucky number
Shaah Jhee, Shahji, a beggar
Shaah Nudghiff, Shah Najaf, a shrine at Lucknow
Shaah ood Dowlah, Shah-ud-daula, a darvesh
Shah Allum, Shah 'Alam II, King of Delhi, his grave
Shah Allumgeer, Shah 'Alamgir, the Emperor Aurangzeb
Shah Jahan, the Moghul Emperor
Shahjee, see SHAH SHERIF OOD DEEN
Shahnama, the poem by Firdausi
Shah Nizaam ood deen, Shaikh Nizam ud-din Auliya, the saint
Shah Sherif ood deen Mahmood,
Shah Sharif ud-din Mahmud, a darvesh

Shampooing
Shaving, discontinued during mourning
Shawm, Sham, Syria
Shawmie, Shami, a native of Syria
Sheah, Shiah, the Musalman sect;
quarrels with Sunnis at the Muharram;
their numbers compared with those of Sunnis;
the creed of
Sheah-maul, *shirmal*, a kind of bread; see SHEERMAUL
Sheekaree, *shikari*, a huntsman
Sheermaul, *shirmal*, a kind of bread; see SHEAH-MAUL
Sheikh Mahumud, Shaikh Muhammad
Sherbet, *sharbat*, a drink, how made;
distributed at the Muharram festival;
payment for at marriages
SHERREFAH, SHERREEFHA, *sharifah*, the custard apple
Sheruff, Sharif, the governor of Mecca
Shimeear, Shimar, the chief agent in the murder of Husain
Shiraaz, Shiraz, a city in Persia
Shoes removed in sacred places and in houses;
varieties of
Shooghur Allah, see SHUGGUR ALLAH
Shopkeepers, mode of doing business
Shroff, *sarraf*, a moneychanger
Shroud, the burial
Shubh-burraat, *Shab-i-bara'at*, the night of record, a festival
Shubnum, *shabnam*, 'dew', a kind of fine cloth
Shuggur Allah, *shukr Allah*,
'Praise be to God!'; see SHOOGHUR ALLAH
Shujah ood Dowlah, Shuja ud-daula, Nawab of Oudh
Shutteringhie, *shatranji*, a striped floor-cloth
Sickley ghur, *saikalgar*, a polisher of arms
Sickness, attributed to spirits
Sikhs, the;
campaign against
Silk, wearing of
Sin, repentance of
Singing women
Siraat, *sirat*, the bridge over which the soul passes
Sirrakee, *sirki*, the reed *Saccharum*
ciliare, used for mats, &c
Sita ki Rasoi, a building at Kanauj
Slaves, domestic, condition of;
female in the zenanah;
liberated by or on the death of the owner;
property of reverting to the master

Snake charmers, deception practised by
Snakes, superstitions regarding;
and monkeys;
tale of an ungrateful;
an adventure with
Soap, substitutes for
Society of Musalman ladies
Solomon, King, tale of;
the first Sufi
Soobadhaar, *subahdar*, a native officer, a viceroy
Soobadhaarie, *subahdari*, a province under a viceroy
Soobhoo namaaz, *namaz-i-subh*, the dawn prayer
Soofy, Sufi, a sect of Musalmans;
consulted to solve mysteries;
pretenders to piety;
assemblage of with singing and dancing;
principles of
Soojinee, *sozani*, a quilted cloth
Soonie, Sunni, the Musalman sect;
rulers at Mecca
Soota-badhaar, *Soutabardar*, a mace-bearer;
see SOTA-BADHAAH
Sota-badhaah; see SOOTA-BADHAAR
Spinach, varieties and uses of
Spirits, evil, exorcism of
Starvation, a cure for disease
Stockings, wearing of in the zenanah
Stone dishes
Strawberries
Subzah, *sabzah*, a song bird
Suffee Ali, Safiya 'Ilah, a title of Adam
Sulleed, *tharid*, a kind of bread
Sulmah, *surma*, antimony applied to the eyes
Sumdun Begum, *samdhan begum*, a connexion by marriage
Surraie, *surahi*, a long-necked water flagon
Surringhee, *sarangi*, a sort of violin
Sutkah, *sadaqah*, offerings of intercession
Suwaaree, *sawari*, an equipage, escort
Sweetmeats, sellers of;
given to a man in a state of ecstasy,
Swine, held abominable by Musalmans
Sword exercises
Syaad, Sayyid, a class of Musalmans;
their origin;
care used and difficulty in making marriage engagements;
respect paid to;

dues received by
Syaad Ahmad Kaabeer, Sayyid Ahmad Kabir,
Syaad Harshim, Sayyid Hashim

Taaif, Ta'if, a fertile tract near Mecca,
Taarkhanah, *tahkhanah*, an underground room,
Taaseel-dhaar, *tahsildar*, a native collector of revenue,
Taaweez, taawize, *ta'wiz*, an amulet, talisman,
Tahujjoot, *namaz-i-tahajjud*, prayer after midnight,
Tale kee archah wallah,
Tel ka acharwala, a seller of oil pickles,
Talismans; see TAAWEEZ
Tamarind tree, the, vegetation beneath it dying,
Tamerlane, Taimur Lang, introduces seclusion of women,
Tarantula, the,
Tattle, *tatti*, a screen, a device for cooling rooms,
Tawurshear, *tabashir*, a substance found in bamboos,
Tazia, *ta'ziya*,
a model tomb carried in procession at the Muharram festival;
not peculiar to India;
not used by Sunnis;
burial of,
Tea, use of,
Teeth, cleaning of, 59
Thonjaun, *tamjhan*, *thamjhan*, a kind of litter,
Throne, of the King of Oudh,
Tigers, tamed, wandering about the house;
adventure with,
Time, Musalman division of;
measured by a clepsydra,
Timoor, Taimur, his invasion of India,
Tin, use of in dyeing and in medicine,
Tithes,
Toddy,
Toothbrushes,
Tope, a grove of trees,
Tor, *tar*, the palm tree, *Borassus flabelliformis*,
Toy sellers,
Trades in Lucknow,
Travellers excused from fasting,
Treasure, burying of,
Trees, speaking on the Mahdi's birthday,
Tuckht, *takht*, a wooden platform on which men sit and sleep,
Tufaun, *tufan*, a storm,
Tumaushbeen, *tamashabin*, 'a spectator of wonders',

Tundhie, *thandi*, a cooling draught taken at the breaking of a fast,
Turkaarie, *tarkari*, vegetables

Uberuck, *abrak*, talc, mica,
Ulsee, *alsi*, linseed, *Linum usitatissimum*,
Umbrella, a mark of dignity,
Umultass, *amaltas*,
the Indian laburnum, *Cassia fistula*, use in medicine,
Ungeeah, *angiya*, an under-jacket or bodice,
Ungeel, *injil*, Evangel, the Gospels,
Unnah, *anna*, a nurse,
Unrurkha, *angarkha*, a long tunic,
Ununas, *ananas*, the pineapple, *Ananassa sativa*,
Urzees, *arziz*, tin, used in medicine and dyeing,
Usury, forbidden

Vakeel, *wakil*, an agent
Vazeefah, *wazifah*, a passage read from the Koran
Vegetables, use of as food
Veil, worn by a bridegroom
Venus, the conjunction of
Vermicelli, used in the times of fasting
Villoiettee Begum, Wilayati begam, 'the foreign lady'
Vizier, *wazir*, the prime minister at the Court of Oudh

Walking barefoot, a sign of mourning Wax from the human ear administered to elephants White ants Widows, dress of; reduced numbers of; marriage of Window glass, scarcity of Witch, tale of a; hair plucked from the head of; has crooked feet; sucking out the vitals of a victim Witchcraft, general belief in Wives, prescribed number of; large numbers of married Women, belief that they do not possess souls; seclusion of Wounds, treatment of

Yaacoob, Ya'qub, Jacob
Yeusuf, Yusuf, Joseph
Yieyah, Yahya, St. John
Yoube, Aiyub, Job
Yumen, Yemen in Arabia
Yuzeed, Yazid, second Caliph of the house of Umaiyah

Zahur morah, *zahr mohra*, the bezoar stone
Zarbund, *zerband*, a waist string
Zechareah, Zachariah
Zeearut, *ziyarah*, *ziyarat*, a visit to a shrine
Zeenahnah, the zenanah, described
Zemindhaar, *zamindar*, a landowner
Zohur namaaz, *salatu-'z-zuhr*, mid-day prayer

Zuckhaut, *zakat*, alms for the poor
Zynool auberdene, Az-zainu'l-'abidin